

Hosting Handbook

Introduction

Students of the World Ltd (SOTW Ltd) would like to thank you for choosing to host a student from overseas! We are very passionate about allowing international students to experience the Australian lifestyle and we are delighted that you are equally as excited.

Hosting a student is a great opportunity to share the Australian culture and your family's way of life. It is also a great opportunity to make a life-long friend, with whom you could possibly visit in the near future, in their country. Our program will allow you to experience and learn first-hand about a different culture.

We have heard many great stories about the friendships made from hosting one of our student and the wonderful experiences that were shared together. Many people have stayed in contact with their former host students and speak very fondly about their time together. It is not uncommon for them to reciprocate your hospitality and welcome your family in to their home if you are ever in Europe. However, especially for first time host families, it can be difficult to understand what to expect from the experience and how to go about it. Hopefully, this handbook will be of some assistance in answering some of these questions. As we tell our students, the experience might be different to what you might have imagined but we ask you to keep an open mind and to enjoy your time with your new guest!

1. What Hosting involves:

Host families are required to provide the student with a family atmosphere and a caring, supportive environment. The family is expected to accept the student as another family member and provide for the physical, emotional and educational needs of the student.

The student should be treated as part of your family and is expected to obey your family rules and contribute to household responsibilities. Perhaps they can even cook a special dish for you from their native cuisine!

2. Why become a Host family?

There are many reasons why families become involved in hosting, including:

- Learning about other countries and cultures
- Providing new experiences for their own children
- Contributing to the development of young people
- Developing international contacts and experience
- Learning another language

Students choose to live with Host families to enable them to practice their English within a supportive environment, to live with a safe, secure and caring family and to complete their immersion in Australian culture and customs.

It is expected that the student will participate in the social life of the family, the educational and cultural life of the school. They are expected to respect the needs of both the Host family and the School.

3. Orientation

All students will have an orientation in Sydney on arrival where they are introduced to Australian culture and the expectations/rules of the schools and homestay families. Some of our students might have this orientation in other cities, depending on their destination.

Students will be made aware of what is appropriate behaviour and will be provided protective behaviours and personal safety should they encounter any inappropriate behaviour. They will have a set of expectations regarding what to expect from their host family and school and provided with information on how Students of the World will assist in case of any problems or incidents.

Each family has its own special way of doing things. It is up to each individual family to orientate their student to their home and neighbourhood, as well as the family's expectations within the home environment.

Homestay parents will need to reiterate the following topics with the student:

- Australian customs,
- How to use local transport (if required) and school busses,
- Where to find post offices, banks and exchange money,
- Family rules and life around the home.

The student is coming to learn our way of life and may need your support with what might seem like basic asks.

4. Welcoming the student

The most important meeting for your family and the student, is the initial one. The student will be nervous, apprehensive and very tired after travelling for a long time. They may also be sad about leaving their own country, family and friends.

Hosts need to be friendly, warm and welcoming. Think about how you would feel in the same circumstance.

Your family will be notified of the student's arrival time and are responsible for arranging to be at the airport to greet the student and to take them to the home.

When the student arrives at your home, please have their bedroom prepared and acquaint them with the family members, home and any information they may need to navigate the new lifestyle.

5. Emotional support

Homestay families must keep in mind the emotional needs of the student in their care. When students first leave home to study overseas, they experience periods of adjustment. They have to find their way around, become used to different food and understand different customs and the way things are organised.

The process of adjusting will take time – be patient – most students learn quickly. There are times when students may have difficulties coping with the pressure from being away from home or being misunderstood. Be aware of these times.

If you feel your student needs extra assistance, you are unsure how to deal with conflict or something involving the student is more than you can handle, please consult Students of the World. We are the point of communication between overseas family, International student, the Hosts and the school.

6. Reporting

If you have any concerns about the welfare of the students, or if a child discloses abuse, you must report this. Please see our reporting policy for full details on how to report. These can be obtained on our website at studentsoftheworld.com.au or by calling our office.

7. Laundry

It is very good for the students to learn how to use the washing machine and to do their own ironing, we therefore suggest that they are shown how to use the machine and encouraged to do their own washing.

If you would prefer to wash the students clothes yourself it is advisable to show students, especially females, where they may discreetly hand wash and dry articles of clothing of a personal nature.

8. Transport

The Host family is required to assist the student with how to use public buses and trains for local travel, to and from their residence. Timetables should be given to the student or help given to find online timetables. The students are responsible for paying their own expenses associated with public transport. Ensure that students are aware that it is necessary to wear seat belts at all times.

Always make sure that your student carries your address and telephone number in case they get lost. Check that they are carrying their charged mobile phone, or they have credit or money for a pay phone.

9. Heating and Cooling

If you have specific house rules regarding the usage of heaters and/or air-conditioners, please make these rules clear to your student. For example, if you require your student to turn the heating/cooling off during the night or to ensure that it is turned off before they leave for school in the mornings, it is

“Students of the World Ltd is committed to child safety and requires a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse from all adults associated with our company.”



very important to make sure that the student understand this. You do not want to be shocked by an exorbitant electricity bill!

10. Telephone and Internet

Using the telephone and Internet can often be a very contentious matter. Students should be advised that it is not reasonable to make or receive calls after 9.00pm and before 7.30am.

Students may have their own mobile phone and cover the cost of this. If the Homestay phone is used, the student should use a pre-paid phone card or reverse charge international calls. To reverse charges, call 0107. Students must take responsibility for the cost of any call they make.

The students are not to spend a lot of time on the internet and must remember that the internet is for the use of all members of the family. They are in Australia to socialize with their Australian family, not to spend each evening e-mailing home. If there is a limit on internet usage in the home, and the students are using too much internet or creating additional charges, please treat the student as your own child and make them aware of the restrictions of internet usage in the home and to respect the house rules around this. Any additional charges incurred by the student should not be absorbed by the host family but be the expense of the student.

11. Bathroom

Please ensure that your student knows how to work the bathroom doors and locks, and how to adjust the hot and cold water. As the bathroom will usually be shared with other family members, the student needs to be considerate about the following:

- Length of time in the bathroom
- The amount of water used
- Storing toiletries
- Removal of dirty clothing
- Disposal of waste especially sanitary products (you may have to explain to the girls the appropriate disposal of feminine hygiene products)
- Leaving it clean and tidy

Students need to understand that water and power are valuable resources and that turning off lights, heaters and taps is ecologically and financially desirable.

12. Meals

Dinner is usually a meal where students are expected to eat with the host family so that discussion can take place at the table. This provides the student with an opportunity to improve their language skills.

Do not be upset if the student does not like all the food you serve. Placing food in central dishes can be helpful, so that the student can help themselves. Some students can be particular about their diets

and the foods that they eat. Rather than spending money on food that they do not like, it can be a good idea to take them to the supermarket and let them select foods that they like.

It is wise to advise your student about meal times and ask them to notify you of any dietary requirements or preferences.

If you find that your student is eating excessively or more than you consider reasonable or more than your food budget permits, please call us at Students of the World so that we can help to manage the situation. It may be that the natural parents can provide some additional funds to contribute to their child's eating habits.

You might wish to encourage the student to show your family how to cook foods from their country. This can be a fun and educational experience for the family too.

13. Insurance

The students all have full medical and travel insurance. If the students need to visit the doctor, it is best that they pay for the visit and then claim on the insurance on their return home.

If a student needs to go to hospital, please contact us and we will let the insurance company know. The insurance company will organise to pay the hospital.

We can assist with any other matter regarding their insurance.

14. Expenses

A condition of the students visit to Australia is that the host family is a volunteer family, who would like to host an international student. A small donation is given to each family to help contribute towards groceries, daytrips and anything else that may help with the host and student experience.

The student comes to Australia with the expectation of paying for their own personal expenses, for example toiletries, public transport to school and social outings. Before leaving for their trip they are also advised that they need to bring some money with them to cover the cost of a school uniform or items of school uniform as required.

15. School

The students are expected to obey the rules that you set for your children. As they are only in Australia for a short time, they may not have as much homework as Australian students, but they are expected to attend school and complete the work set, to the best of their ability. Please ensure that they are following this rule.

The school will assist you with their school transport if required, class timetables (they may wish to tag along with your children or attempt different classes) and purchasing a uniform. A second-hand uniform is usually the best option for a short stay.



Please contact the school for details and assist your student with getting the uniform and organising their transport. This can be done prior to the student arriving or you can make these arrangements on the first day of school, it is best to be guided by the school.

16. Flight arrival and departure information

The students disembark their international flights in Sydney. For those not staying in New South Wales, the students then travel on a domestic flight to reach their host family, wherever they may be in Australia. Flights to host families are booked 2-3 weeks before the student's arrival in Australia and the return domestic flights are booked 2-3 weeks prior to the student's departure from Australia.

Once the flights have been booked we will advise you of the details so that you are able to plan ahead and arrange to collect/take your student to the airport for their arrival/departure.

We hope you enjoy the experience of hosting an international student.

We are here for you through the entire process and aim to make the hosting experience as fun and positive as possible.