

# **Brisbane Christian College**

## **Homestay Program Information For Homestay Providers**

Welcome to the Brisbane Christian College  
Homestay Program.  
The College wishes to thank you for your participation  
in the Program and the enrichment the school receives  
because of your participation.

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Brisbane Christian College has a proud record of quality when looking after our students from overseas. While many of our international students come from Korea and Taiwan, we also have enjoyed students from Mainland China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and various Pacific islands such as Solomon Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. This, combined with the culturally diverse domestic population at the College, makes Brisbane Christian College a rich cultural experience where all students can feel a part of the community.

As with domestic students, all international students are tested academically before commencing studies to determine the best combination of courses and experiences for each student. The dedicated ESL staff provide a variety of educational experiences to ensure students learn to write, read and speak English quickly and proficiently. This is backed up with a carefully regulated Homestay program to protect and nurture each overseas student.

The behaviour and attitude of each student is also monitored to counter any problems as they arise. As a result, our long-term international students have developed high level English skills and our short-term students look back on their time at Brisbane Christian College with warm memories and a desire to learn all they can.

Please read the contents of this information booklet carefully so you can maximise the benefits of the time you will spend with Brisbane Christian College

Sean Morrison  
Principal

## General Homestay Family Information

### Expectations

Expectations will be as varied as the student's host. Your student's expectations are "high", as for many, this will be their first trip abroad to an "exotic" location. They come with the anticipation of becoming part of an Australian family. All you need to do as a host family is to make them feel welcome and encourage them to be a part of your family. Talk to them, ask them about their family, home, country, cultural differences, etc.

Students that come to stay with you have family at home who can be concerned about their grandchild, daughter, son, brother, sister, being away from home for some time. They may contact you soon after arrival. This is always to introduce themselves and sometimes a hopeful, unwritten request for communication in return. If you have time please reply to them with reassurances that the student will be well looked after.

### Student Protection

#### Selection and Screening

The College recognises that Child Protection begins with the recruitment, screening and selection of people who are in a position to provide safe and supportive accommodation for international students.

The College has the following selection criteria as part of its Risk Management for child protection:

- Homestay family and the student attend church regularly to support the Christian ethos of Brisbane Christian College
- Homestay family can supply a supportive family experience for the student which includes parents, siblings and if possible, extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, close family friends etc)
- every person residing in the household over the age of 18 has a valid Blue Card issued by the Queensland Government (<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>)
- Homestay family members' main language is English
- Homestay family will have the knowledge to support the student to complete homework and assessments
- Homestay family needs to provide details of two referees, who will be contacted to discuss the suitability to provide safe, secure and supportive homestay accommodation.
- Homestay family to open their home for an inspection and approval visit, and where required a visit during the period of the homestay.

Homestay accommodation will be organised according to the ability of the homestay to meet the needs and requirements of the students. The welfare and best interests of the students must be the primary consideration.

### Management Procedures

The College will seek regular and frequent feedback from both the student and the homestay family to help ensure behaviour and facilities are of a high standard, and to address any concerns that may become issues without being addressed early.

Monitoring may occur through the following:

- Regular surveys of homestay students, which includes an evaluation of their accommodation and welfare arrangements and taking action as required
- Informal meeting with student to support and monitor adjustment
- Liaising with teaching staff
- Visit to the homestay residence once every 6 months.

## **Child Protection**

**Brisbane Christian College's Child Protection Policy outlines the definition of Harm as per Section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999-**

“**Harm**” caused to a student under 18 years, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation.

**Please refer to Brisbane Christian College Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Risk Management Strategy for further clarification.**

## **Bathroom and Toiletry Items**

We ask that you provide a clean, hygienic bath/shower, with sufficient hot water.

## **Cleaning**

Some cultures are not accustomed to tidying their own bedroom, picking up their clothes or making their own beds. You may have to explain that this is necessary, so that you can clean their room properly. Encourage your student to help clear up after dinner as this is a wonderful opportunity to talk together.

## **Asking Friends Over**

Most students like the option to be able to bring a friend home. You need to advise the student that they must ask you in advance so that (if it is OK'd by you) the necessary arrangements can be made. This will give you the opportunity to find out what time they will arrive, food requirements and number of friends.

## **Activities**

The College offers a number of extra curricular activities for the student to participate in during the week and on the weekends. Please ask your student to see the receptionist for full details.

## **Your students ability to communicate with you**

Ability to speak English will vary from student to student. Until they come to stay with you, they probably will have learned lessons at school, in accents we would not recognise; hence they may have difficulty with ours.

- Initially you will probably notice that your student can read and write English better than speaking it. Therefore, it is best to *write it down* for a clearer understanding.
- In some cultures they say *Yes* even when they really mean to say *No*. An example of this is – “Don't you like meat”, your student may say “Yes”. Meaning “that's right I don't like meat”.
- If they have not understood what you have asked, they will often say “Yes”, because they do not want to offend you.
- Students are reluctant to say *No* to their families and use *maybe* instead. They feel this is a more polite way of saying *No*.
- When a student is unsure they will *shrug their shoulders*, look at you *blankly* or simply say “So-So”. This is their way of showing you that they are undecided on whether it is good or bad. Please do not take offence with this as no disrespect is intended.

## **Cultural Differences**

### **Modesty**

▪ Girls from all cultures, but particularly from Asia, are sensitive about the washing of their underwear. You may need to explain that you do not want it draped *over the furniture* or *hung in the wardrobe*, and that in Australia it is *hung outside on the clothesline*. If it is a problem, maybe you can provide a small rack where they can hang it in private.

### *General Homestay Family Information continued.....*

▪ Female students should be informed of the arrangements for the disposal of sanitary towels. We suggest that you provide a number of brown paper bags, in their room, with an explanation of how to dispose of them. Having this available in their room on their arrival will save a lot of embarrassment.

### **Adjusting to living with your family**

▪ Your student may feel uncomfortable in *asking for extra items* that you have not thought of. For instance an extra blanket in the winter months or a small fan when too hot. He/she may be from a hotter or colder climate than ours. Don't be surprised if your student sleeps with the windows shut.

▪ You may need to encourage your student to "*feel at home and help themselves*" as they may feel uncomfortable doing that as a "visitor to your home". You may need to encourage this several times.

▪ Some students may wait to be shown how to *use the shower*, as their bathrooms differ from ours. It is a good idea to show them that in Australia we do not stand outside the shower to wash ourselves. This will avoid water all over the bathroom floor and stop any embarrassment to the student and homestay family. Please ensure that they have enough time and that they understand that other people also need to use the bathroom.

▪ *Fear of the dark* is very real for many students, particularly those from Asia. If you notice that they are sleeping with the light on, it may be wise to provide them with a small torch or night light.

▪ *Our toilet and bedding* can confuse students from certain cultures. You may need to show them that we sleep between the sheets and under the blankets. Similarly our toilets are very different from Asia. You may need to explain how it works, e.g. flush, disposal of sanitary products, etc.

▪ In many cultures the housework is the role of the mother. Some students will give you strange looks when they see the husband helping with this. We like the homestay family to encourage their student to help with the housework, keeping their room tidy and washing up after dinner etc. This is a great opportunity to talk with your student and makes them feel part of the family

### **Eating with your Student**

▪ Please give your student enough time to adjust to the "*Australian Diet*". Your student may not be too keen on our type of food, or they may be too shy to *help themselves*. As a result you may find food or crumbs in their bedroom. You could provide them with a *plastic container with a sealed lid* for any food items they would like to keep in their bedroom. This will make them feel more at home and also keep the bedroom clean.

▪ In some cultures it is acceptable to *burp or slurp food* at the table. In those countries this is a compliment to the "chef". However this can be awkward. If it becomes a problem it is best to speak to the student alone and explain gently that this is not a part of the Australian culture.

▪ In many countries children do *not speak during the meal*, or eat separately from adults. Mealtimes can be a little daunting for them at a typical Australian dinner table. Try and include them in your family conversations at this time. It will help them relax and give them time to adjust.

- It is helpful to place *servicing dishes on the table* so students can serve themselves. This will avoid embarrassment, with foods they will not eat or portions that are too large/small. Saying NO is very difficult when you dish up the portions.

# Homestay Code of Ethics & Good Conduct Guidelines for Brisbane Christian College

## 1. Homestay Provider (College Staff)

Brisbane Christian College recognises that the homestay providers may come from a variety of family compositions and cultural backgrounds and that these will not be the basis for acceptance or rejection in the homestay provider group.

### ***Code of Ethics***

In arranging homestay accommodation for international students attending Brisbane Christian College the Homestay Program staff guarantee to:

- Be aware of the needs of the international students and have processes in place to support and assist them.
- Accept flexibility of regulations and communication practices that may be necessary to meet the diverse and variable needs of international students.
- Adhere to non-discriminatory practices set out by Brisbane Christian College based on race, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic or religion.
- Keep all possible communications open, honest, and appropriate to the situation.
- Commensurate with the students' communication needs and their level of understanding, information should be translated where possible.
- Put the best learning interests of individual students above all other financial and organisational needs as without this focus the impact on the homestay experience can be extremely negative.
- Act with sensitivity and discretion and enact a process of crisis management, in time of grief and trauma.
- Have access to opportunities for professional development with regard to the provision of homestay care and meeting the needs of international students.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Homestay providers and international students' right to privacy under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.

### ***Good Conduct Guidelines***

International Student Welfare Officer must:

- ❖ Provide ongoing support to homestay providers and students as necessary.
- ❖ Advise homestay providers and homestay students of the expectations of homestay by means of orientation, written documents and information.
- ❖ Inspect all the providers and homes registered in the Homestay Program.
- ❖ Provide an orientation of the expectations/requirements of the program.
- ❖ Visit each homestay provider and place each student in a home, which is, to the best knowledge and belief, a safe and suitable home for the students.
- ❖ Ensure all students are placed in appropriate families with guardianship arrangements in place.
- ❖ Monitor the number of household/family members to guest ratio.
- ❖ Ensure payment arrangements are confirmed with the homestay providers.
- ❖ Follow up any complaint made by the homestay students/providers within 24-48 hours.

- ❖ Respect and be responsive to the beliefs and diversity of cultural requirements of homestay providers and homestay students by providing alternative accommodation immediately if it is believed that the welfare of the student, or host, may be at risk.
- ❖ Interact effectively and co-operatively with other departments within and outside of the College.
- ❖ Act openly and professionally in all dealings with other homestay providers and institutions.
- ❖ Ensure that the confidentiality of homestay providers and students is preserved under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.
- ❖ Undertake process and impact evaluations, (ie. six week cooling off period assessment and six monthly student placement checks) with the homestay providers and students to ensure that standards and requirements of student placement are met under the basic ethical guidelines.
- ❖ International Student Welfare Officer's/staff should have specific training, skills and experience to provide homestay management services appropriate to the role and level of service they are providing (including demonstrable ability in meeting the specific needs of international students).
- ❖ All staff within the Homestay Program must meet the requirements of the Queensland Government and Young People's Commission, ie. obtain a Positive Notice Blue Card.
- ❖ The International Student Welfare Officer will seek feedback from the host family regarding the student's progress and welfare.
- ❖ The International Student Welfare Officer will seek feedback from the student to ensure the student is satisfied with the accommodation supplied.

## **2. International Homestay Students**

### ***Code of Ethics***

- Students need to be made aware of the accepted code of behaviour within the homestay.
- Students need to be encouraged to communicate in an honest and respectful way thus developing positive relationships with providers which are based on mutual trust and communication. Disguising a problem to 'save face' may not, in fact, be the best way to deal with a problem.
- Students should be advised on acceptable levels of hospitality and may not take advantage of the generosity offered by families.
- Students should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with families which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Students should be enabled to take responsibility for their own practices and needs.

### ***Student Good Conduct Guidelines***

The student will be expected to:

- ❖ Be financially independent; pay the placement fee to Brisbane Christian College; pay the homestay provider the 2 week bond up front, and then the agreed weekly amount in advance. He/she must meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, telephone calls, medical expenses and other personal, incidental costs.
- ❖ Respect and adhere to guidelines/rules for living in the household as given by the homestay family which may include conditions such as no smoking, no alcohol, spend no longer than four (4) minutes in the shower and leaving the bathroom tidy.
- ❖ Offer to help with minor household chores such as washing up and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy.
- ❖ Be considerate and keep noise to minimum after 8.30pm.
- ❖ Ask the family before inviting friends over.
- ❖ Ask their own parents or guardian to contact the homestay family and give permission for any late nights or overnight stays.
- ❖ Advise the homestay family about any social activities and when they will be home for meals.
- ❖ Pay for any damage to family property (if the student is responsible for the damage).
- ❖ Keep all valuables, money, passport and airline tickets in a safe place.
- ❖ Conduct yourself appropriately and be prepared to participate in reasonable family activities
- ❖ Respect and be aware that cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay provider may be different from their own.
- ❖ Communicate with the homestay provider on a day to day basis. Students should be open about their needs/wants. For example, need to make a phone call late in the night (after 10pm).
- ❖ Advise the International Student Welfare Officer immediately of any concerns of their health or welfare which may arise in the homestay environment.
- ❖ Adhere to the guidelines set down in this "Homestay Information Booklet", orientation for students and any other advice given about the homestay program.
- ❖ Be aware and abide by the laws of Australia, for example, wear bicycle helmets, respect legal age of drinking, etc.
- ❖ Abide by the Rules and Guidelines for students attending Brisbane Christian College.
- ❖ Students are required to give two weeks notice prior to their intended departure date from the homestay.

### **3. Homestay Hosts**

#### ***Code Of Ethics***

Homestay providers are expected to:

- Develop positive relationships with students which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each student and the levels of each student's strength and weakness.
- Support and assist students to live comfortably within a foreign environment.
- Respect the student's rights to privacy whilst realising that privacy does not equate to isolation.
- Acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their student and accommodate appropriately for these within the family's life.
  - Assist, support and nurture where needed or requested, but keep in mind that a desire to please may be interpreted as interfering by the student.

#### ***Minimum Facilities required for the homestay student***

**Homestay hosts will be expected to provide as a minimum requirement:**

- Single room complete with a standard bed (no mattress on the floor), including full clean linen.
- Have a closable door.
- Hanging space for clothes.
- Cupboard space.
- Curtains or blinds on all windows.
- Access to a study area, which has a desk, chair, lamp, computer with internet access with adequate ventilation and natural light.
- A room with a window and adequate ventilation to cover our extreme temperatures.

(Makeshift rooms including garages, storage areas, portioned areas, etc are not acceptable.)

- Provide a safe environment which will offer the student a total experience of living as a member of an Australian family which encourages positive study habits.
- Provide the student with good healthy food (breakfast, lunch and dinner every day of the week), laundry facilities and a supportive environment.
- Ensure that all family/household members over the age of 18 meet the requirements of the Queensland Government and Young People's Commission (i.e. obtain a Blue Card).
- Use English as the main language spoken in the home.
- Offer help, guidance, support and encouragement with language practice, studies, planning leisure activities and adapting to living in Australia (this may require patience and empathy and a willingness to show the student more than once).
- Provide an orientation within the family home eg. use of the pool area and house facilities and security.
- Applicable house rules should be explained, i.e. what time dinner is, telephone protocols, rules regarding smoking, alcohol, guests visiting, curfews, household tasks and bathroom conduct. This should be attended to as soon as possible after arrival. Families are encouraged to provide the student with these rules in writing.
- Offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the student.
- Respect the student's need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Have a duty of care towards their homestay student.
- Liaise with the International Student Welfare Officer regarding any concerns or difficulties.

- Advise the International Student Welfare Officer of any change in the standard or element of the accommodation provided.
- Provide supervision of the student. This supervision includes out of school hours, study and pastoral care and requires an adult to be home 4—7 nights per week.
- Advise the International Student Welfare Officer of any changes to information supplied on the homestay application form.
- Inform the International Student Welfare Officer of any aspects of the student's behaviour and/or attitude which may impact on their studies or the safety of the student or others.
- Be responsive to the cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay student by allowing the student to continue familiar cultural practices without criticism.
- To adhere to guidelines set down by the Homestay Guidelines.
- The International Student Welfare Officer will not knowingly place a student in a family that is already hosting a student who speaks the same language, except under extenuating circumstances and with the approval of the student's parents.

Should you wish to continue with your application to become a Homestay Host you **MUST** read the following documents:

## **General Student Welfare**

Brisbane Christian College is aware of the international students' needs and has processes in place to support and assist them.

Brisbane Christian College will support the social, psychological and spiritual needs of international students that include:

- 1) Access to appropriate counselling services;
- 2) Support of homestay providers;
- 3) Sensitive management of internal and external grievance processes.

Brisbane Christian College is responsible for international students over holiday periods, including the Christmas holiday period.

Brisbane Christian College is responsible for all aspects of pastoral care for their international students from the point of landing in Australia or the agreed date of transfer from another signatory, to the end of the contract for homestay program.

Brisbane Christian College is aware of cultural and religious differences of students. For example Muslim students will have practices relating to food, food preparation, and storage, drink, religious observance and dress that need to be respected and accommodated.

Brisbane Christian College will ascertain if any student has any health condition that may affect their study or require treatment. Homestay providers will be made aware of any relevant health problems of students in their care.

### **Information for Students**

Should students consider that they have received behaviour that has been inappropriate they should report the behaviour to:

- a) Any teacher the student trusts and or the International Student Welfare Officer and / or
- b) The Head of Primary or Deputy Principal.

The way reports are handled are outlined in the Child Protection Policy 5.4-5.9

### ***Privacy of International Students***

Personal information of any student is subject to the Privacy Act, the provision of which prohibits the disclosure of any personal information or details. Brisbane Christian College must ensure that all personal information, as defined in the Privacy Act, is obtained, stored and released in accordance with the Privacy Act.

### ***Communication Arrangements***

Brisbane Christian College will establish communication arrangements with the parents/guardian of international students. This means that Brisbane Christian College will arrange a way to contact parents/guardian in case of emergency, and for ongoing liaison concerning the student's welfare.

**Accommodation**

Brisbane Christian College will document which category of accommodation each student is living in, ensuring applicable monitoring and follow up takes place.

Brisbane Christian College has in place stringent processes for all aspects/areas of the homestay program such as processes for assessing, selecting and approving prospective homestay providers and processes for the ongoing monitoring of the providers.

**Homestay Contact List**

**International Student Welfare Officer**

Registrar team 3719 3102  
OUT OF HOURS Emergency number 0424143518

**Brisbane Christian College** 3719 3111 3274 1071 (fax)  
Absentee line 37193170

Further information about Brisbane can be obtained from [ourbrisbane.com](http://ourbrisbane.com)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MUST BE READ WITH THIS BOOKLET**

This booklet must be read in conjunction with our

- Child Protection Risk Management Strategy
- Child Protection Policy
- Student Welfare and Accommodation Policy

**Potential Homestay Hosts to read and sign if in agreement and wishing to proceed:**

Once all the above have been read please sign below that you have read and understand the contents of this document and those listed above and agree to partner with us in adhering to the contents therein to effectively provide a safe and supportive environment, where the risk of harm is actively minimised to produce an environment conducive to learning and progress;

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If relevant, please disclose any information relevant to your eligibility to engage in activities including young people:

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