

# A Homestay Family

## GUIDE FOR ISP HOSTS



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73  
(Kamloops-Thompson)

KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT PROGRAM

[ispcanada.ca](http://ispcanada.ca)



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# Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to be a homestay host parent!

This booklet is written from the perspective of the SD73 Kamloops-Thompson International Student Program (ISP) team and what we have learned through years of conducting this program. We hope that this booklet outlines most of what you will want to know prior to and during the homestay so that you can prepare to host an international student and provide a welcoming and educational homestay experience for them.

Please read through this booklet and then refer to the ISP section on the SD73 website. Make a note of your questions and feel free to contact the ISP team.

## What Makes Homestays Successful?

The International Student Program (ISP) team has discovered the factors that most enhance international homestay students' experiences in a homestay environment.

### Top Five Things Homestay Students Appreciate:

1. Feeling welcome and as if they are part of your family.
2. Joining you and your family members in regular activities.
3. Learning English.
4. Building lifelong memories.
5. Experiencing how Canadians live.

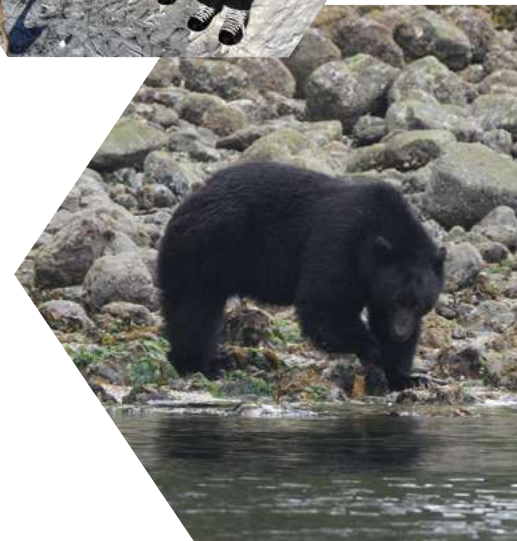


## What Makes Homestays Challenging?

The ISP team is aware that certain factors can be challenging for international students.

### Top Five Things Students Find Difficult:

1. Food differences and preferences.
2. Families that are too busy to spend time with them.
3. Not having opportunities to participate in traditional/cultural occasions.
4. Feeling unable to express concerns or desires.
5. Feeling as though the family's motivation to host is monetary.



## Creating a Warm Welcome

To prepare a welcoming foundation for your homestay student's stay in Kamloops, establish a connection with them well in advance of their arrival in Canada. Let them know that you (and your family members) look forward to meeting them and will be waiting for them at the airport when they arrive.

Here are some actions you can take to create a warm welcome:

- Confirm the flight arrival time with your student/s prior to their travel date.
- Monitor YKA website to track the flight schedule.
- Be at the airport 30 minutes prior to arrival; if you cannot be at the airport 30 minutes prior to arrival, arrange for an alternate adult to pick up your student.
- Students appreciate seeing a welcome sign! Hold up a sign with their name on it so that they can find you quickly.
- Introduce yourself and anyone who is with you. Take a picture with your student and send it to their parents.

## Introducing the Student to Your Home

Upon arrival at your home, the student may be tired, hungry and anxious to let their own family know that they have arrived safely. To help your student settle in and prepare for a productive and enjoyable first day of school, we recommend doing the following:

- Introduce the student to your family members, including any pets.
- Show the student their room and where they may put their luggage and personal belongings.
- Provide the student with your WiFi password so they may contact their family members and let them know that they have arrived.
- Offer the use of the bathroom and show them how the toilet, shower and bathtub function.
- Offer a beverage, snack and/or meal.
- Make sure they know that they can retire to sleep right away if they want and are not obligated to sit up with you and converse.
- Ensure that they know what time to be up in the morning for the first day of school.
- Reassure them that you will be awake at that time and will have breakfast ready and a lunch packed for them. (They will prepare their own breakfast and lunch after the first day.)

## Preparing for the First Day of School

- The ISP team will have already contacted you regarding expectations for the first day and about student/homestay orientations.
- The student will receive a copy of the International Student Handbook during the first week of school and may want to review it with you.
- On the first day of school, an ISP team member will meet the student at their school to review school start-up information before the day's classes begin.
- Check the school's website for information specific to the school.
- Arrange for transportation to and from school each day; check the [Kamloops Transit System](#) website regarding in-town public transit or contact School District No. 73 Facilities/Transportation at 250-372-5853 to [register for busing](#).
- Give the student your phone number(s) in case they need to contact you; let them know if they can text you.
- Ensure that the student has packed a lunch and has it with them.

## Your Responsibilities as a Homestay Host

As a host, it is up to you to support your student so that they get enough sleep, participate in activities, feel comfortable communicating with you and your family members and generally feel at ease, safe and welcome in your home, despite cultural differences in daily living.

### Sleep

The combination of jet lag, speaking English more than usual and dealing with cultural and time zone differences means that your student will experience fatigue, at least initially. It is essential that you support them in getting enough sleep for their needs. For example, as you know, misuse of technology (such as reading online in bed before sleep) can be a major challenge with respect to sleep patterns.

Make sure that the student is aware of your expectations regarding adherence to a regular bedtime.

If you notice that sleep becomes an issue, please contact the ISP team as soon as possible, and we will support you in finding a resolution.

### Curfew

Your house rules should include the hours students are permitted to be out, especially in the evenings. Factors determining curfews include whether it's a school night or the weekend, what types of activities you're involved in, and the ages of family members in the homestay.

Our International Student Program supports a curfew of 10 p.m. from Sunday to Thursday night (School nights), and midnight on Fridays and Saturdays (weekends). Different arrangements can be made for special circumstances.

Students are expected to clearly communicate with you their plans and to stay in contact with you throughout the evening – especially if they find themselves delayed – such as missing a bus.

If you find curfew to be an issue for your student, please contact the Homestay Manager.

## Activities

Provide plenty of opportunities for your student to engage in activities with you and your family members. Social and family events, dog walking, playing board games, engaging in sports, and even routine errands such as shopping and cooking can afford cultural insights and language-learning opportunities.

Support the student's participation in **ISP activities**. You can do this by assisting them to prepare for the activity, offering to drive them to the meet-up location and discussing the activity afterwards.

Remind the student that they are responsible for the financial cost of participation in any non-ISP and community activities.

## Communication

Make sure that your student feels comfortable enough to ask you questions and to contact you whenever they want/need advice or support. Confirm that they have your contact information and know that they can contact you at any time. Discuss and agree on the method(s) of communication: texting, phoning, instant messaging, using an app and so on. Be sure to include other members of your family when talking about communication.

It is your responsibility to know where the student is at all times and to respond to them as soon as possible if they do contact you. It is the student's responsibility to let you, their homestay host parent, know where they are at all times and to respond to you as soon as possible if you contact them.

It is the student's responsibility to have a Canadian Cell Phone plan, prior to arrival and stay in contact with their host family at all times. Please exchange cell numbers with your student prior to their arrival.

## Cultural Differences

Be aware of, acknowledge, accommodate and talk about cultural differences. For example, some students do not drink cold drinks during winter or perhaps prefer to shower or bathe prior to bed rather than upon waking up in the morning.

## Building a Relationship with Your Student

As your student begins to adjust to you, your home, your family and a different way of life, they are likely to have many questions. It's important to anticipate these and answer them early while forming a relationship with the student. Addressing questions is also a way for the student to get to know you and your family and also to learn more English. Here are some key questions that the student may have:

- What do I call you? [Remember to ask what the student would like to be called, as some prefer to be called by a nickname rather than by their legal name.]
- Where can I put my luggage, personal belongings and toiletries?
- When is it convenient for me to shower or bathe? [Some students prefer to do this as part of their bedtime routine.]
- Do I have my own washcloth and towel?
- What areas of the home are private?
- Where am I allowed to be or go in the home?
- When is supper? When are weekend mealtimes?
- What can I do to help with meal preparation and cleanup?
- When is bedtime? What time must I get up in the morning?
- Can you show me how to make my breakfast and lunch?
- May I help myself to food and beverages? What do you consider a snack, and where are snacks kept?
- What is the earliest and latest that I may use the kitchen?
- Can you give me a ride to school if I am late and miss the bus?
- What do I do about my dirty clothes? Can you show me how to use the laundry machines?
- What am I expected to do daily, besides make my bed and keep my bedroom and bathroom tidy and clean?
- May I help with other chores?
- May I rearrange my bedroom?
- May I put up posters in my bedroom? How can I attach them?
- What is my curfew on weekdays and on weekends?
- Are sleepovers allowed? Am I allowed to sleep over at a friend's homestay house?
- When are family members' birthdays and what holidays do you celebrate? How do you celebrate?



## Adjusting to the Home

As you know, different countries and cultures have differing routines, habits, norms, standards and expectations. Thus, your homestay student may need your support while they adjust to living in your home. To assist them through this adjustment period, please do the following:

- Demonstrate to the student how to use the toilet, shower and bathtub.
- Show them where they may keep their toiletries and personal washcloth/towel.
- Explain to them where in the home they may and may not go; emphasize that the privacy of all members of the home, including the student, is respected.
- Make a schedule that includes wake-up time, supper time and bedtime, and post it where they can refer to it; you may want to include special outings, events and holidays (such as birthdays) on this schedule.
- Show them where beverages, snacks and items for making their breakfasts and lunches are kept.
- Instruct them in how to use the laundry equipment, if you want them to do their own laundry; if you prefer, you can do laundry for them.

## Food Expectations

Your student may have different expectations regarding mealtimes and the types of food and beverages that will be prepared. Please do the following to support your student's adjustment:

- Discuss these expectations with the student.
- Discuss mealtimes, including how the student can assist with preparation and cleanup, if they would like.
- Show them where food and beverages that they can help themselves to are kept.
- Explain that they are expected to prepare their own breakfast and pack a lunch for school, once they feel comfortable doing so.
- Consider taking the student grocery shopping with you, as this is a great opportunity to review likes and dislikes (and for them to practise and learn more English).
- Pay for the student if you as a family wish to go out for any meals or snacks.

## Travel

For the duration of the homestay, your student is considered to be under your care. Therefore, if you as a family want to travel with the student outside of Kamloops, such travel is permitted, provided that you inform the ISP Homestay Manager. Please take note of the following:

- If the student wants to travel outside of Kamloops without being under your care or that of the ISP, ask the student to complete and submit the [Travel consent and release form](#) two (2) weeks in advance of such travel. All travel must be pre-approved by the ISP.
- You are responsible for the student's costs (other than for incidentals such as gifts) if they travel under your care, but the student is responsible for their costs if they travel without being under your care.

## Illegal Activities

To ensure that you are aware of what constitutes illegal activities in regard to the ISP, please be sure to do the following:

- Read the [ISP Rules and Conditions](#), the [District Code of Conduct](#) and the [District Drug and Alcohol Policy](#).
- Ensure that the student is following the contract, code and policy.
- Note that, while in Canada, international homestay students are prohibited from driving any motorized vehicles, including cars, trucks, motorcycles, snowmobiles, off-road vehicles, dirt bikes, and so on.

## Host Family Information

Any change in your home is significant and will have an effect on your student, so it is essential to keep your host family information updated. Please do the following:

- Keep the ISP Homestay Manager apprised of any changes that will impact the student's stay: such changes include changing your address, changing your contact information, having a family member move in or out, renovating your home, getting a pet or an additional pet and so on.
- Ensure that ISP has at least one emergency contact phone number to reach you and your family members.

## Communication

Your student wants to learn English, experience Canadian culture and enjoy themselves. Communication is key. You can support this communication by:

- Ask the student to paraphrase your words, especially when you are explaining or demonstrating something to the student, as this is an excellent tool to use in confirming understanding.
- Write down your message and/or instructions and ask the student to read them aloud to you, as reading skills when learning a new language are generally stronger than speaking skills.
- Ask the student to write down instructions; again, writing skills can be stronger than speaking skills, and writing can support further clarification.
- Use visual tools, such as calendars.
- While communicating with the student, it is important to remember that non-verbal gestures may not have the same meaning in their culture.



- When interpreting the student's words, facial expressions or non-verbal gestures, use different ways to paraphrase what you think they are communicating; avoid interpretation from your own cultural orientation.
- Listen to the student and encourage them to feel that you are interested in what they have to say.

## Homestay Family's Responsibilities

Outside of the school program, you as a homestay host parent and family are responsible for your student. Therefore, you agree to do the following:

- Pick up and drop off the student at the airport or arrange for another responsible parent to do so.
- Provide a welcoming and friendly home environment that is safe, clean and welcoming and that promotes sleep, communication and study.
- Provide a private room with basic furnishings, including bed and bedding; a night table with a reading light; drawers and a closet for clothes and other belongings; and a desk, chair and lamp.
- Provide access to a washroom, including facecloths/towels, toilet paper, tissue and soap.
- Provide laundry facilities, including detergent: either show the student where to put dirty clothes if you will do the laundry or else show them how to operate the laundry machines.
- Cook suppers and weekend meals and eat with the student for the majority of these meals.
- Instruct the student in how to prepare their own breakfasts and packed lunches, and show them where food, beverages, dishes and lunchmaking supplies are kept.
- Provide nutritious and sufficient foods and beverages for all meals and snacks.
- Give the student a house key and all relevant contact information, including family name and address; home telephone, work and cellphone numbers; and email addresses.
- Ensure that the student knows that they are responsible for changing their sheets, keeping their bedroom and bathroom clean and tidy and putting out their garbage.
- Familiarize the student with your neighbourhood and with Kamloops.
- Show the student how to get to the nearest bus stop and provide instructions in how to use Kamloops Transit System; give them a bus schedule and show them how to use it.
- Help your student download the Transit app on their phone. <https://transitapp.com>
- Help your student to open a local bank account and advice them not to carry large sum of money.
- Discuss family rules/guidelines with the student regarding mealtimes, snacks, computer and internet use, cellphone use at the table during mealtimes, curfews and friends visiting and/or staying overnight.

- Spend time each day with the student; conversation and participation in activities with you and your family members will support them in getting know you better, practicing speaking English and learning about Canadian culture.
- The ISP Program will review Cyber Security with students. Please reinforce with students not to engage with any unknown callers or messages they receive via call, text or email. Encourage students to show you any questionable communication.
- Retain a copy of the student's medical insurance card (MSP or Studyinsured); in case of a medical emergency, contact the ISP Homestay Manager.
- Review ISP student rules and conditions.

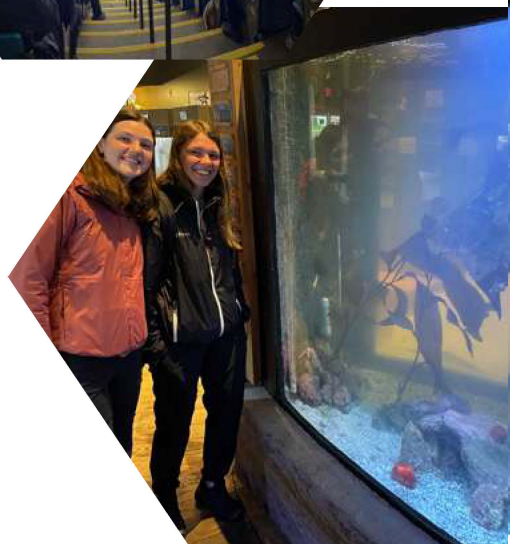
## We are Here for You

The ISP team is here to support you during your homestay placement experience.

Please contact any member of the ISP team immediately if:

- You receive a call from the school regarding your homestay student's attendance, behaviour or academic performance.
- You have concerns regarding the student's presence in your home.
- You have any other concerns or questions.

Keep in mind that your concerns and questions are valid and reasonable. Please make a note of them; it is preferable to address them as soon as possible so that problematic issues do not escalate.



## Kamloops Medical Centres List

If the student has a **Studyinsured** international student health insurance card or a BC Medical Services Plan (MSP)/BC Services card, the card must be available when making appointments and must be brought to and presented at all initial medical appointments. For a medical issue that does not require an emergency room visit, please use Studyinsured's Mobile Doctor.

### Kamloops Urgent Primary Care and Learning Centre

Address: 102–311 Columbia St., Kamloops, BC V2C 2T1

Phone: 250-314-2256

Location: Street-level entrance off of the Clinical Services Building of Royal Inland Hospital (RIH)

Fee: Payable upon registration; claim online at [www.studyinsured.com](http://www.studyinsured.com)  
See [centre website](#) for more.

### Kinetic Energy Healthcare & Wellness Centre

Address: 207–450 Lansdowne St., Kamloops, BC V2C 1Y4

Phone: 250-828-6637

Location: Downtown in Lansdowne Village between London Drugs and Dollarama

Fee: Payable at appointment; claim online at <https://www.studyinsured.com//kamloopsisp>  
See [website](#) for more.

### Royal Inland Hospital (RIH) Emergency Services

Address: 311 Columbia St., Kamloops, BC, V2C 2T1

Phone: 250-374-5111

### 8-1-1 Phone Line

A free-of-charge provincial health information and advice operated by HealthLink BC (Ministry of Health) that allows you to speak with a registered nurse, registered dietitian, qualified exercise professional or pharmacist

Hours: 24 hours a day (24/7)

## ISP Contact Information

Main Office Location and Phone Number

### Kamloops-Thompson International Student Program (ISP)

1770 Springview Place, Kamloops, BC V2E 1X9

778-471-6075

Homestay Program Emergency Phone: 250-319-7832

## ISP Team

District Principal	Kent Brewer	<a href="mailto:kbrewer@sd73.bc.ca">kbrewer@sd73.bc.ca</a>
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Program Coordinator	Rob Doherty	<a href="mailto:rdoherty@sd73.bc.ca">rdoherty@sd73.bc.ca</a>
English Language Support Teacher	Liam Hogan	<a href="mailto:lhogan@sd73.bc.ca">lhogan@sd73.bc.ca</a>
Activities Teacher	Tom Beeke	<a href="mailto:tbeeke@sd73.bc.ca">tbeeke@sd73.bc.ca</a>
Office Steno	Kyra Fisher	<a href="mailto:kfisher@sd73.bc.ca">kfisher@sd73.bc.ca</a>

## Social Media

Instagram: [istudentsd73](https://www.instagram.com/istudentsd73)



## Participating Schools

Brocklehurst Secondary	250-376-1232
Clearwater Secondary	250-674-3328
Kamloops School of the Arts	205-374-3200
Norkam Secondary	250-376-1272
Sa-Hali Secondary	250-374-0861
South Kamloops Secondary	250-374-1405
Valleyview Secondary	250-372-5231
Westsyde Secondary	250-579-9271



# Your Notes and Questions

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CANADA

UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA

Whitehorse

Yellowknife

Edmonton

Saskatoon

Kamloops

Banff

Calgary

Vancouver

Victoria

Seattle

Regina