

HomestayNews

March 2022 • Spring is in the Air! 

Conversation Starter Topic:

What changes have you made to reduce your impact on the environment?

Spring has arrived and Daylight Savings Time, “spring forward,” is March 13th at 2AM. The longer days, and hopefully nice weather, can provide more outdoor activities for students. Please feel free to share any unique activities that your student is showing interest in or that you are doing together. It can be good to introduce them to others with similar interests or outdoor hobbies.

Hosting in the Summer

We are once again able to provide special summer programming to international students. There will be two short-term programs this summer for students aged 10+. Each 3-week program Homestay Fee is \$750.

Program 1: July 3rd - July 23rd

Program 2: August 7th - August 27th

If you are interested in hosting 1 or 2 students for these short term summer programs, please reach out to your Homestay Coordinator. Students will be in school or out on a program activity Monday - Friday from 9AM- 3PM for the first two weeks and from 9AM - 4:30PM for the 3rd week.

Homestay Fees

We occasionally receive inquiries regarding exactly how homestay fees are set. Please note that there are many careful considerations that we have to take into account when we set homestay fees. Some of these include -

- What other school districts in BC and the lower mainland are charging
- Global economy and markets (what price point is reasonable)
- The fact that this is tax free money and that auditors could deem that this is income for our host families and we would have to issue taxation forms (and in turn you would have to claim this as income)
- Among many other things

We have over 1000 agent partners who publish marketing materials and catalogs. People also plan their study abroad experience significantly far in advance. Currently, our partners are recruiting for the September 2023 intake. We have to set our fees almost two years in advance, so there is an aspect of having to 'crystal ball gaze' as well. Once set and published, our published fees are considered to be contractual. Many countries in Europe and South America have strict consumer protection laws and once a cost is published and shared, we could be sued or held liable for any changes.

In the past, when many of our students were from Asia, it was normal for students to pay their homestays out of pocket - directly. With a move towards other markets, this is seen as distasteful to some, so we collect the fees and send out cheques. We are very transparent with our parents that every cent of what we collect for homestay fees goes directly to our families - we do not keep a percentage or portion of that fee at all.

In the past, we have been in a pattern where we have one year where our program fee increases (usually due to increases in insurance costs), one year where our homestay fee increases (typically by \$25 - \$50) and one year where we hold steady. I am currently publishing our 2023-2024 fees and there will be a substantial and unprecedented homestay fee hike to \$1100 per month. We appreciate your loyalty and support.

Student Departures and Summer School

Now is the time when we are starting to receive / confirm the departure flights for international students leaving at the end of the school year.

As a quick reminder, international students under the custodianship of our program (namely the Program Director Karen Symonds) need to return to the care of their natural parents on or before June 30th. That can mean flying home to their parents or their parents coming to meet them in Canada and travelling here before returning home.

Students' study period with Delta School District ends on June 30th. For liability and insurance reasons, they cannot remain in a Delta School District provided homestay past then, even with your permission.

Students staying for summer school are still in the program and they are typically here to graduate. Not all graduating students will stay for summer school. Many have not been able to visit their parents at home for quite some time and this summer they will (and should) take advantage of the opportunity to have a vacation at home. After summer programming students are asked to return home.

Each semester homestay families, due to their kindness and fondness for their student, offer them a place to stay past their study period.

Because the relationship was created via the school district's Homestay Program, extending their stay past the completion of their study term is not possible. The "relationship" between the school district and student must be severed to remove any potential legal issues.

This is something we remind homestays of each semester as there have been situations (very sad ones) in other school districts over the years and prove why this bears repeating.

Natural Parents Visiting



Covid-19 put a halt to international travel. We are seeing travel pick up again and hearing from host parents, students, agents, and natural parents about planned Canada trips for students' families.

We are completely supportive of natural parents and siblings of our students visiting Canada.

As homestay parents, please do not feel any pressure or obligation to also host parents or siblings of your students.

Please let us know if your students tells you about plans for their family to visit Canada. We love the opportunity to meet and say hello to parents visiting their children here.

March Break Plans

Quick reminder from the post in last month's newsletter. If you have plans for March Break, please let us know. Forms need to be completed if your student will travel with you and temporary coverage needs to be arranged and approved by our office if you will be travelling without your student this time.

Reach out to your Homestay Coordinator or Brent with the information.

Budgeting with Homestay - Shared Activities

In a continuing section of our Newsletters, we will attempt to provide some useful tips on how to remain budget conscious but still provide an environment that is welcoming and enjoyable for international students. Last month we suggested meatless days of the week to help trim the grocery bill. This month is about outings and activities.

Family outings can be expensive, but students naturally still want to see all they can see during their time here. Sharing those trips with other host parents can help reduce overall costs, while students still get to see what they want to see.

Taking your student's friend along with your family on an outing and then allowing your student to join their friend's host family on another outing down the road helps to split the overall cost to each family (fuel, additional tickets and food / snacks). It is also a good eco-friendly choice as it means one vehicle going to that destination and not two! Encourage your student(s) to introduce you to their friends and we can assist in setting up communication between host parents if needed.

Discussing World Events

Conversations about difficult, complicated, and upsetting world events can be tough. Adding culture differences can make it all the more difficult.

Some students, and adults, may be especially emotional about the current events in Ukraine.

Delta School District has developed a good resource for parents and teachers to use in conversations about global issues.



**Click Here
for Link**

Please do not hesitate to reach out to our team if you feel your student, or yourself, could use some assistance.

Travelling with your student outside of the Lower Mainland?

Contact [Brent](#) so we can get the documentation and permission in place before your trip!

Please let us know early about travel plans. There are special Covid-19 and travel visa considerations when travelling abroad (including the US) with your international student.

If you are planning a day trip, please let us know. The same documentation is not required but because Karen Symonds, the Program Director, is the custodian for the majority of our students, we do need to know where they are travelling to.

It allows us to stay in the loop and be ready to assist if the need arises.

Student Wellness

Inviting your student into the garden to grow something with you.



It provides them the opportunity for some fresh air, working with their hands, and seeing a result for their efforts.

It also creates a situation where you and your student can have a conversation and “check-in” with how they are doing and with what is going on in their lives.

Homestay Referral Gift Card

We are still actively recruiting more homestay families. If you refer a family who completes the application process and is able to host a student, you will receive a \$100 referral incentive gift card. Need is still greatest in Ladner and Tsawwassen but North Delta families are also more than welcome!

Stranger Attacks

There has been a trend in the Lower Mainland of unprovoked attacks on people by strangers.

It is not something that we want to scare students over. With Spring Break and students exploring more, it would be a good time to remind them of what they can do if a strange / aggressive person invades their personal space. They can:

- Call out for help
- Go up to another adult and ask for help
- Go into a store and tell the clerk what is happening and who is bothering them
- Call 911, followed by a call to you or our emergency line.

We want all of our students to have a safe and enjoyable time. We also want them to have the confidence to know what to do if they find themselves in a situation that makes them uncomfortable. Being proactive and aware of their surroundings is the #1 most important thing at all times.

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Our dedicated team of Homestay Coordinators are here to support you. Feel free to reach out to them.

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