

HomestayNews

September 2023 • Welcome Back to School!

Welcome back to school! New students have arrived, registered, and are now getting their first experience in a Canadian classroom.

Returning students are getting back into the swing of things. Please reach out to your Homestay Coordinator if any early questions or concerns come up. It is best to work on small things early, before they become big things. Students should be at school everyday. If they are not feeling well, let the school know that morning.

Concerts and Sporting Events

As we continue to update our [Homestay Handbook](#), we wanted to highlight something that has already come up in discussion. Students are not allowed to attend evening concerts or sporting events in downtown Vancouver on their own. They require an approved adult, aged 25 or above, to be with them.

Cell Phones

Students should all have a working local phone number now. It is a requirement of the program and students are informed before leaving home. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Students need to keep their phones active throughout their stay. They can set up auto-loading online.

Conversation Starter Topic:

If you got a tattoo / piercing, what would you get and where would you put it?

Neutrality and Early Bonds

With students settling into school life and homestay life, you may notice some shifts. Spending time together early (something we also speak to the students about) is very important in building that bond between student and host parents. There will likely be a time down the line when having that strong bond will help everyone through a tough situation - be it a missed curfew or unintended damage.

After the honeymoon period of culture shock and adjustment, you may notice more negative tones or comments coming from your student. This is a natural adjustment process to how things are different here compared to their home country. The same is true for at school and in the home. It should be another phase in the culture shock process and not meant to be permanent.

Try to maintain a neutral stance on things if students are showing negativity. Especially regarding school based issues. The information surrounding the situation may not be clear or widely known. Please reach out to our staff here and we will happily do our best to provide more context on the situation. We cannot share student grades or scores, but can happily explain the differences in procedures that may be causing them this confusion and subsequent annoyance.

Cameras in the Home

Students from other countries and cultures may not be used to security cameras on personal property. In some countries it is very common.



If you have installed a doorbell cam and / or other security cameras around your home, please show your student. It can show them that it is for their safety and prevent any confusion, worry, or misunderstandings.

Follow-up to Homestay Zoom Sessions in August

Ahead of our two August Homestay Zoom sessions, we sent out a list of questions. The agenda was to answer them in the Zooms, but time got away from us. Here are the answers to those questions:

#1: Can I continue to host my student after the end of their study period if I say it is okay with me?

For the majority of our students living in our homestay program, Karen (and by extension the School District) is Legal Custodian. This is a huge risk for the School District to manage. Once their study term is over, the ability to cover any liabilities is also over. This means Karen is PERSONALLY liable for the student. As well, homestays cannot assume custodianship as this is seen as a loophole - as the student was introduced to the host family through the program and the program is run by the district.

Question #1 continued:

We need to be able to show a distinct break in our responsibility for our students as of the last day of the study term. This means their parents pick them up, they return to the care of their parents, OR they find a new custodian and living arrangement not associated with the program. Students and parents are given advanced notice of the last day of the program AND this is all explained in the legal agreement they sign with us so it should be of no surprise.

#2 What is the role of custodian and who is the custodian for my student?

The Legal Custodian, from an immigration perspective, serves as a guarantor that the student is coming into the country for study purposes and has adequate supervision and care arranged for their study period. Basically, the custodian is legally responsible for the student while studying in Delta and is authorized to give (or deny) permission for various things in absence of the parents. For most students in our homestay, Karen (and by extension the School District) is custodian. Our homestays also act as an extension of this, providing the day to day care for the students. Please check your student's profile that you received from your coordinator to see who the custodian is. If it is not Karen, please make sure you make contact with the custodian and have their phone number programmed into your phone.

Continued:

#3: When do I need to inform the program that I am travelling with my student, even if only for a day?

Part of being responsible for students in our care is knowing where they are. It is never a good thing if a parent contacts us trying to get in touch with their student and you are potentially out of cell phone range and we don't know. Or if a student gets sick and we find out they are in Whistler, that never looks professional or responsible either. We do need to know where a student is in the chance that something goes wrong.

#4: Can I take my students to the United States? What is the process for doing so?

Maybe! Some students are easily able to go to the United States with ESTA and a simple form. Other students require a US Visa, and if they don't have one the process to get one is cumbersome. Please contact [Brent](#) if you would like to go to the United States with your student and we can talk feasibility and process. Please give us as much notice as possible so we can offer accurate advice and have time to prepare documents required to cross the border.

#5: When can I expect my homestay cheque?

Although we aim to have the cheques in your hands on the first of each month, you can always expect the cheque (except for September) during the first week of the month. Sometimes illnesses, computer issues, inclement weather, etc. can impact the cheque arriving on the actual first day of the month. Please note that Delta is one of the few programs that provides the cheques at the first of the month - most programs are after the 15th or at the end of the month.

#6 Can I have my homestay rent direct deposited?

Yes ... BUT the process is not a smooth one. We can accommodate up to 5 requests a month and please don't count on the first month working as planned. It seems like it takes a couple of tries to get things to 'stick' properly in the school district system. If you would like to have direct deposit requested, please contact your homestay coordinator and we can queue you up and get you on that when you come to the top of the list.

#7: When should I direct a request from a natural parent to a member of the homestay team?

Communication with parents should be about simple day to day routines, life, etc. If a parent asks a question about study permits or immigration advice, offers criticism of you, your family or your home, asks for you to change or alter house rules or has any question about student courses or progress at school, please direct them our way. Of course, if there are any questions that make you uncomfortable, also direct our way!

#8: Who do I call if I have a question or concern outside of business hours?

If something is urgent (in that it cannot wait until the next business day) please call Karen at 604-396-6862. If you cannot get a hold of her (or you receive an out of country message on her phone) you can also try Brent, Jim or Claire. If it can wait until the next business day, please send an email or set a reminder to contact your homestay coordinator during business hours.

If it is an emergency, please call the emergency phone.

[STUDY INSURED MEDICAL INFORMATION](#)

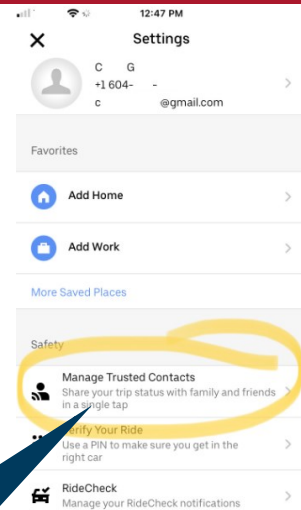
Students Taking Uber

The quick answer to the question of whether or not our students can use Uber, Lyft, or other ride sharing apps is **Yes**.

They should not be used in situations such as going to the doctor or to the airport for a flight home. Homestay families are expected to accompany their students to such places. Taking an Uber with their friend to go shopping in Vancouver on a Saturday afternoon is a more accurate example of when Uber is allowed.

Students need to make their own account and use their own credit card. They should not be using your account or credit card details.

Safety built into the app allows them to share their location with trusted contacts. Make sure they have you listed as a trusted contact. You are then able to see where they are in the Uber in real time. They can also have multiple drop off points which allows everyone travelling in the ride to get dropped off at their home.



Delta ISP October Activity - BC Lions Game

On October 20th, Delta ISP will be going to its first BC Lions game! It is the last home game of the season and should make for a fun evening.

Sign-up information has already gone out to students. Sign-up will start September 26th after school. It is first come, first served.



It will be a late return that evening. Homestay parents will need to pick up students from the drop off points.

This event is replacing the Fright Night event that was wildly over crowded and understaffed last year. Students are permitted to go to Fright Night. They need to go with friends and have a communicated plan with their homestay parents. Host parents should also have the cell phone number of a friend their student is going with.

Travel

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

Please let us know early about travel plans. Driving to the US requires an [ESTA](#) and [I-94 form](#). Not all nationalities can visit the US freely. We will prepare a travel letter to the US, even for day trips, with your international student.

If you are planning a day trip, please let us know. The same documentation is not required if staying in Canada, 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 outside of the Lower Mainland. It allows us to stay in the loop and be ready to assist if the need arises.

Community Sports

A lot of school sports are already underway. Interest in community sports is also strongly encouraged. Here are a few websites to help students who may not know where to start:

[SD United](#) - soccer in Ladner and Tsawwassen



[NDFC](#) - soccer in North Delta



[South Delta Basketball Association](#) - community basketball program ran by homestay parents!



Food

With a new person in your home and at your dinner table, some different food preferences may be appearing.

It is always nice to share the food knowledge we all have. Interest in food from your student's homeland is a great way to show interest in their background and perhaps allow you to try something new. Vancouver is fantastic for having supermarkets / delis / shops that supply just about any country's food. It may even carry your student's favourite "comfort" food or snack.

Meals together are important. So is nutrition. Students need fuel to study. Encourage discussions around foods and what meals can work for your home. Some students love to see a meal plan for the week, which may also help with organization in some busier homes.

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.

Homestay Handbook

We have uploaded a working version of our [Homestay Handbook](#). We are continuing to make adjustments and edits to it. Please review it on our website and reach out to your Homestay Coordinator if you have any questions.

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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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