



**HOWICK**  
**COLLEGE**



**Homestay Carer  
Guidebook**



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## Welcome

Thank you for deciding to host an International Student from Howick College and welcoming them into your family. Whether they are with you for a long or short stay, your contribution to their experience in New Zealand is highly valued.

Howick College has earned a reputation for providing quality, caring host families for our students. It is not only our responsibility to deliver a high standard of education but to also provide for our international students' safety and wellbeing. Therefore, it is important that the school and the homestay carers work together to support students in fulfilling their study and personal goals whilst respecting the requirements of their student visa.

We hope that hosting our student will prove to be a rewarding and fun experience for you and your family. As well as helping a young person to learn and grow, you will also get to learn about their culture and lifestyle.

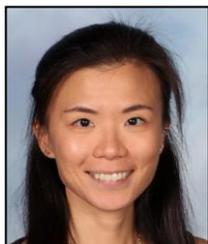
## OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEAM

These are the people who will be looking after your student at Howick College. You can talk to them at any time, and you will find them in the Community Development Office.

**Community Development/International Director – Mrs Jennifer Roshan**

[Jennifer.roshan@howick.school.nz](mailto:Jennifer.roshan@howick.school.nz)

Phone 534-4492, ext 847



**Homestay Coordinator – Ms Nele Meers**

[nele.meers@howick.school.nz](mailto:nele.meers@howick.school.nz)

Phone: 534-4492, ext 901



**International Administrator – Mrs Tina Liu-Reilly**

[Tina.liu-reilly@howick.school.nz](mailto:Tina.liu-reilly@howick.school.nz)

Phone: 534-4492, ext 801



**ESOL & Online Learning Teacher – Mr Simon Stephenson**

[simon.stephenson@howick.school.nz](mailto:simon.stephenson@howick.school.nz)

Phone: 534-4492



*"Inspiring a community of passionate learners | Whakamanawahia tētehi hapori o ngā ākonga hihiri"*  
Email: [international@howick.school.nz](mailto:international@howick.school.nz)

## OUR STUDENTS

Howick College welcomes International Students from a wide range of countries. Some may come for a short experience of one or two terms, others may stay for a year or longer. Whether they come to gain qualifications or whether they come to improve their English, they all enjoy the opportunity to experience our unique Kiwi lifestyle. New Zealand is seen as a natural and safe country with an excellent education system.

Most of our students come to Howick College aged around 14 -17 years old and will be living away from home for the first time in their lives. For them, and their parents, it is both exciting and scary. It may take a little time and patience to help them to settle in and gain confidence.

For many students, the New Zealand way of life is very different to what they are used to. Here, for instance, they may not have as much personal freedom as at home or they may find themselves with much more free time than they are used to.

As with New Zealand children, every student will be different and will bring their own unique strengths and challenges. Your help in understanding and supporting them is greatly appreciated.

## YOUR ROLE AS A HOMESTAY

As a Homestay family, you are providing a student with the opportunity to experience the New Zealand lifestyle as a member of your family. When you first meet your student, be open and direct with them. Discuss any cultural differences and encourage your student to talk about their family, country, and schooling.

Although students pay for their accommodation, meals, and laundry, they are not staying in a hotel and are encouraged to participate in your family life by helping where they can and joining in with family activities.

### **Each student is to be supplied with:**

- their own room and bed (no sharing)
- clean linen
- adequate storage for their belongings
- a desk
- suitable lighting for study
- heating for their bedroom

There are rules that we expect the students to follow while they are in New Zealand which we go over during orientation on their first day. They will also be given an orientation and homestay handbook. It is a good idea to sit down with them in the first few days and go through this. You may have some additional rules or routines that apply to your family. Please discuss these with your student so they are aware of what you expect.

### **Everyday Routines:**

- Meal and bedtimes
- Showering times
- Security – what doors to lock when they leave the house etc.
- Computer use and broadband expectations
- TV – how to turn on and off.
- Daily chores – making bed, rubbish, empty dishwasher etc.

### **Bedroom:**

- Bed – if necessary, show them how to make it and how to sleep under the top sheet and duvet
- Electric blanket – how to use (or hot water bottle/wheat bag).
- Storage – where they can put their things.
- Keep it tidy – put clothes away, pick up items, no food or drink in bedroom.

### **Shower/Bath:**

- What time is convenient for them to use the bathroom.
- Hot water – explain how the hot water system works and how long they can shower.
- Keep it tidy after use – hang towels, wipe surfaces, pick up hair etc.

### **Laundry:**

- Where to put their dirty laundry.
- Bedding – what day to put it out. Let them know if you expect them to change the sheets or if you will do it for them.
- Hand washing – where they can hand wash and dry items if they prefer.

### Getting Around:

- Show them the closest bus stops and how to catch a bus.
- Show them where the closest shops are.

### School:

- Help your student to buy their uniform (**NZ Uniforms, Unit B, Bishop Dunn Place, Botany. Weekdays 9am to 5pm, Saturdays 9am to 12 noon. Ph: 09 281 3531**) Students enrolled for 3 months or less (One Term) can hire a Howick College uniform from the international department (subject to availability) or can wear their school uniform from their home country.
- Discuss how they will get to and from school each day.
- Show them how and where to catch the bus.
- Walk them to school so they know the route.
- Arrange where to meet them if you pick them up.
- Students are expected to attend school on time each day – just like NZ students. Please wake your student(s) if they are getting up too late, just like you would for your own child.

**STUDENT ABSENCES:** please email the reason to [note@howick.school.nz](mailto:note@howick.school.nz) as soon as possible on the first morning of the absence. International Students **must have an attendance rate of at least 95%** or their study visa may be affected.

### Alcohol:

- Students under 20 years of age are not permitted to drink alcohol.
- **It is illegal for alcohol to be sold/supplied to anyone under 18 years old**

### Smoking:

- Howick College does not condone smoking or vaping.
- **It is illegal for cigarettes to be sold to anyone under 18 years of age**

### Drugs:

- If a student is taking/buying illegal substances, please contact the International Student team **immediately**.
- Please also contact us if you suspect a problem may be developing.

### Tattoos:

- Students are not permitted to get tattoos while they are enrolled at Howick College.

### Cars and Driving:

- Students are **not** permitted to own or drive a car while enrolled at Howick College.

## AIRPORT PICK UP & DROP OFF

The Homestay Coordinator will liaise with you to confirm pick-up/drop-off details. International students are charged \$120 to cover the cost of one airport pick-up and one airport drop-off each year. Please advise the Homestay Coordinator after you have made the pick-up/drop-off and they will arrange for the payment to be transferred to your bank account. If you are unable to do this yourself, please ask your student to discuss alternative arrangements with the Homestay Coordinator.

It is often possible to share arrangements with other homestay parents who have students on flights arriving or leaving at the same time. If you can pick-up/drop off more than one student at a time, please advise the Homestay Coordinator and you will be reimbursed accordingly.

## MEALS

New Zealand food can be very different, especially breakfast and lunch. A lot of students miss the food from home and whilst it is nice to accommodate their tastes from time to time, you are not expected to cater to their preferences for every meal.

**Students must be provided 3 nutritious meals every day. As well as breakfast and dinner, please provide them with a packed lunch on school days.** Weekend breakfast, lunch and dinner can be arranged to suit your family routines.

- Please try to provide healthy food options.
- Please have a supply of rice and noodles for Asian students.
- Please provide the same meals and snacks your family usually has.
- Please provide them with a shelf or space to store some of their own food.
- Let them know which food they can help themselves to at any time.
- If students want to buy their own snacks, please ensure they know where this can be stored. Most families don't want students to store food in their rooms.
- Encourage your student to help with meal preparation – perhaps they could make something from their own country?

**Please make it clear to your student if they will be expected to make their own breakfast and packed lunch – many students will not be used to this so you may have to show them how.**

## INTERNET & TELEPHONE

Most students will purchase a cell phone when they first arrive. This makes it easier for them to keep in contact with you and their parents. Some students may have an international calling card which is loaded with credit for international calls. If they already have a mobile from home, please help them to buy a NZ Sim card.

**The internet:** This is an important part of modern education, it also makes it easy for students to keep in close contact with their family at home, which helps them to settle in.

- Please discuss with your student how much broadband they can use and if necessary, how they are to pay you for their share. If they need or use more than agreed please discuss alternatives with them – this may be extra broadband or another line.
- Students should not enter offensive websites, or download unnecessary files (i.e. movies) without paying for them. Please inform the Homestay Coordinator or Student Administrator if you have any concerns about computer use.

Please check that your student is not spending long periods of time on websites in their first language as this slows down their English language development. They should also be discouraged from staying up late playing on the computer.

We recommend an **10:00 pm curfew for devices and internet** on school nights unless they have important homework to finish. Turn the modem off if necessary.

## CARS & DRIVING

Howick College International Students are **NOT** permitted to drive while they are enrolled at our school. **This includes having driving lessons either with you or through a driving school.**

Please ensure that anyone driving your student has a full NZ Licence. Young and recently licensed drivers should also be avoided as they lack the experience to drive safely. Feel free to check the licence of the driver and say "no" if you are not happy with the situation.

**REMEMBER:** If you are not comfortable with either the driver OR the car  
PLEASE do not allow your student to drive with them.

## GOING OUT

As your student settles in and makes friends, they will become more confident about going out on their own. Students are expected to check with you before they go anywhere after school, at weekends or during holidays so that you know where they are at all times. Please bear in mind that many of our students are used to a lot more freedom at home and will often meet up to socialise with their friends after school so there is room for flexibility around being home for mealtime. However, it is important that you discuss your expectations with them and agree what will work best for both parties.

## RECOMMENDED CURFEW TIMES

<b>Monday-Thursday</b>	All students to be home by <b>7:00pm</b> . Student to advise homestay by <b>4:00pm</b> on the day if they will be eating out or would like dinner to be kept for them. They are NOT allowed to go into Auckland city on a school night.
<b>Friday (after school) and Saturday</b>	14 years and under home by <b>9:00pm</b> 15 years home by <b>10:00pm</b> 16 years home by <b>11:00pm</b> 17 years and over home by <b>12 midnight</b>  Students may go into Auckland city but may NOT stay overnight.
<b>Sunday</b>	Home by <b>7:00pm</b> . Students may go to Auckland city during the day.

### **IMPORTANT - If your student wants to go somewhere always:**

- Ask where they are going and who they are going with
- Check how they are getting there and coming home
- Agree what time they will be home
- Check they have their mobile with them (or have a card/cash to phone you)
- Check that their mobile is charged and has credit

**If you are not happy with any of their arrangements or have any concerns about the situation, please feel free to say 'no'. You are responsible for the safety of your student – just as you are for your own children.**

### **Overnight stays**

Overnight stays with another Howick College Homestay family are permitted providing you have contacted the other family and confirmed that the student is expected and there will be adult supervision.

For overnight stays with a family who is **not** a Howick College Homestay, the college **MUST** have signed, written permission from the student's parents **BEFORE** the student leaves.

**Howick College has the final decision for approval.**

### **Going to a Party**

- Confirm the address and phone number of where they are going.
- Check with the host that there will be adequate adult supervision.
- Make sure they stick to the curfew times. *In cases with special circumstances, these times may be negotiated at your discretion.*
- **International students are NOT permitted to drink alcohol under the age of 20 years**

## **TRAVEL & TRIPS**

While your student is living with you, please consider them as part of your family and encourage them to participate in family outings, events, and visits. Interaction with your family and friends helps both their English and social skills.

You may want to take your student to visit places and attractions around Auckland. Some activities can be quite expensive so please make it clear to them what expenses you will be covering and what they will need to pay for. For example, it is expected that you would pay for their meal out but not for them to do a bungee jump.

In some countries the host is expected to pay for everything so if your student would like to come with you, please make sure they understand the situation and what costs are involved e.g. accommodation, eating out, activity fees or petrol.

**Remember:** Willingness to join in with the family varies from student to student. Encouragement is the key, but don't be disappointed if they would rather not.

### **Taking your student on holiday**

If you invite your student to join you on a family holiday, it is expected that, as part of the family, you will pay for their accommodation and meals. Please ensure the student understands all additional costs involved and agrees to pay for their share. This is especially important if you are planning a trip or holiday outside of Auckland. Some students may not be able to afford to pay for extra holiday costs so by making it clear beforehand you will avoid any misunderstandings and upset on the day.

If you wish to take a family holiday without your student or your student is unable to come with you, please contact the Homestay Coordinator to arrange alternative homestay accommodation for your student while you are away.

### **Travelling outside the Auckland area**

1. You must advise the homestay co-ordinators as soon as possible if you want to travel with your student outside Auckland.
2. Students must fill in the **Application to Travel Outside of Auckland** form available from the International Office.
3. The student's natural parents will need to email their signed permission to the Homestay Coordinator before the travel date. *One note from the natural parents can cover all trips.*
4. If the student will miss any school days, they must get signed permission from all their teachers.
5. Students must have permission from the International Director before they travel.

**IMPORTANT:** If your student wishes to take part in any dangerous or adventure activities such as Bungee Jumping, they **MUST** have permission from their natural parents and the International Director.

## **EMERGENCIES & ACCIDENTS**

There are three numbers you can use in case of an emergency or accident involving your student. Please keep these in a safe and easy to find place. Students are encouraged to contact you in the first instance if they need help. If the situation requires immediate help from police, fire, or ambulance, they are to call 111. If they cannot reach you, they may also use the Howick College emergency numbers. If your student is with you and requires help, please use your common sense to determine if a 111 call is needed. If so, call and ask for the service you need, apply first aid, and keep your student as safe as possible, then phone the Howick College emergency number. In cases where you can get the student to a hospital or medical centre, do so and then inform Howick College by using the emergency numbers.

**Please note** it is **NOT** your responsibility to contact the student's parents. In an accident or emergency, contact with the parents is only to be made by Howick College. Do not let students phone/text parents until we have determined how serious the situation is and what can be done. Students often panic and parents can be very traumatised if given incorrect or incomplete information.

**Howick College 24 Hour Emergency Phone:**  
**021 420987**

If there is no answer then call  
**0210 201 4411 (Jennifer Roshan)**  
**Help for fire, police or medical emergency:**  
**Dial 111**  
Then call the school 24 hour Emergency number

## CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Once Howick College has placed a student in your home you will receive a profile for that student with relevant information about them and their family. You may begin to get to know them via email before they arrive. Some families have a lot of contact with the student's parents while others have very little. For the natural parents, it can be reassuring to have contact with you before their child leaves for New Zealand.

Sometimes a student's parents wish to accompany them to New Zealand to help them settle in or visit while they are with you. Most parents opt to find accommodation close by, but some may ask to stay at your house for a few days. You are under no obligation to host them, but if you do, we recommend they pay you \$50 per day. However, this is a private arrangement between you and the parents. If you have any concerns regarding your student, please contact the school only. It is our responsibility to contact the parents with issues if it is required.

### **Homesickness and culture shock**

Moving to a new country to live can be a very exciting but scary at the same time. There is a lot to learn and adjust to, everything is new and different – the culture, food, weather, language, and people.

Some students settle in quickly while others take a bit longer to adapt and can experience homesickness and culture shock. Regular contact with their home family is important but be aware that too much can sometimes prolong the settling in period. Once or twice a week is the recommended.

### **What to expect**

Your student may experience all of the following stages or just some of them. They may also go through the stages very quickly or it may take some time - everyone is different. As their new family, it is important to be patient and supportive.

**Leaving home** – students are often excited about their new adventure but nervous and sad to leave their family and friends.

**First Few Weeks** – there may be an initial 'high' as the excitement of new experiences continues. Some students may become tired, and some may experience anxiety as they realise, they have left their support system of friends and family.

**Further Along** – homesickness may strike after the excitement wears off. Students may feel lonely, confused, anxious and may question whether coming to NZ was the right thing to do. They may suffer head and tummy aches, be tired a lot, and change their sleeping and eating patterns.

**Eventually** – students settle in and begin to make friends. Routines and school life become familiar. They begin to enjoy their new life and confidence increases

### **You can help your student by:**

- Being patient and understanding
- Encouraging them to join clubs and activities at school
- Involving them in family activities
- Reminding them that their homesickness will pass
- Use Google translate to help them communicate with you
- Allow them to have some quiet time on their own
- Show an interest in the student's culture

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Email: [international@howick.school.nz](mailto:international@howick.school.nz)

## YOU & YOUR STUDENT

Your student and their parents have chosen to come to New Zealand to benefit from entering our lifestyle and education system; they want to learn English and experience another, sometimes quite different culture. Your role in their experience is a big one and with your support, understanding and encouragement, their stay here will be a positive one.

### Please remember:

- If you have **any** concerns regarding behaviour, health, or emotional health, etc; let us know so we can help both you and your student.
- You are responsible for the care and safety of the student – sometimes they may not be happy with your directions, but it is up to you to ensure their safety, just as you would with your own children.
- Each student will be different and have different levels of confidence and capabilities.
- Encourage your student to interact with your family and friends and to speak English as much as possible.
- Help them with their homework and be involved in their schoolwork i.e., attend parent/teacher interviews if possible.
- Encourage them to get involved in clubs, sports, or groups available at school or locally.
- Attending school and being on time and in correct uniform is important. Please help your student to achieve this.

## COMMON PROBLEMS

<p><b>Our student says they don't have to go to school every day.</b></p>	<p>Attendance is a condition of their enrolment and student visa. The same rules apply as for New Zealand students. If they are ill, please advise the student office: <b>note@howick.school.nz</b>. They must also be at school on time each day.</p>
<p><b>Our student stays up very late at night and then oversleeps in the morning.</b></p>	<p>Remind them of the importance of being at school on time and keeping quiet so the rest of the family can sleep. Wake them at the right time until it is a habit. We suggest an 11:00 pm internet curfew.</p>
<p><b>Our student doesn't help around the house.</b></p>	<p>A lot of families overseas have home help so they may not be used to doing chores. Explain that it is usual in New Zealand for everyone to help. Show them what you need them to do. However, they are not to be used as housekeepers or regular babysitters.</p>
<p><b>Our student has been here for a while now and the improvement in their English seems to have stalled.</b></p>	<p>There is often a big improvement in language when the student first arrives, then progress can stall for a while. This is usual in learning a new language and another rise in progress will follow.</p>

<b>Our student doesn't do any study and says they don't have any homework.</b>	<u>ALL</u> International students have homework or revision work to complete. Even if they are not doing NCEA, they should still be completing homework, assignments, and assessment work.
<b>I can't tell if our student is happy or sad. They don't show any emotion at all.</b>	It is usual in some cultures to not display emotions. Your student may show more emotion once they get to know you better.
<b>Our student spends all their time in their bedroom and not with the family.</b>	When a student first arrives, dealing with all the new changes and having to speak English all day can be very tiring. It is a common problem with new students. Once the student settles in, they may feel more comfortable spending time with you.
<b>Since our student has been with us, our electricity/water/computer bills have gone way up.</b>	Discussed turning things off (i.e., heaters) when not in use, having shorter showers and how much internet they can use. Let them know what they need to do to help keep household costs down. If they need more internet, talk to them about whether they can pay for more broadband or another line.
<b>Our student won't look me in the eye. It is a bit annoying.</b>	In some cultures, making eye contact with adults is impolite. They may be showing you respect. Let them know it is okay in New Zealand.
<b>Our student has been here for a while and seemed to be ok but now they are homesick.</b>	There are different stages of settling into a new life and they may have been riding on the initial excitement. Let them know it is normal to feel homesick and encourage them to keep busy and involved. This stage will pass.
<b>Our student doesn't do anything at the weekends and seems bored.</b>	A lot of students are used to having longer days at school, lots of study and extra-curricular lessons at home. The idea of 'free-time' can be a new concept for many students. Encourage them to join in groups or sports. They are given information at school about various things they can join.
<b>Our student never answers a request (such as what they would like for lunch) with a definite 'yes' or 'no' even when I can tell they have a preference.</b>	A lot of students will find it difficult to tell you their preferences as they don't want to seem rude, especially if they are declining something. Let them know it is ok to tell you.
<b>Our student told the Homestay Coordinator that they are cold/hungry, but they haven't said anything to me about it.</b>	Often students will tell someone else about a small problem as they don't want to cause embarrassment or upset in their homestay. Encourage them to talk to you openly about any problem they have.

<b>Our student doesn't tell us the truth.</b>	While you may experience a few small 'cover ups' when the student wants to avoid hurting your feelings/appearing rude, not telling the truth is a frustrating issue. Explain the importance of honesty in building trust, respect, and a good relationship.
<b>Our student treats the homestay father politely but treats me and my daughter as if we are servants and is arrogant towards us.</b>	A lot of cultures give a higher status to males. Your student is acting according to what is normal in their culture and may not be aware that it is not acceptable in NZ. Explain to them that in NZ, everyone is treated equally.
<b>Sometimes our student appears rude and speaks too informally with older adults. We have noticed a few swear words being used as well.</b>	It can be difficult to understand the different levels of formality in the English language when you haven't grown up speaking it. Students will copy the language they hear around them and will not always know when it is appropriate to use it. While this can create some funny moments, it is important best to let them know when it is not okay.

**Remember:** Most problems can be solved by talking about the issue. If you have any concerns or have tried to sort things out but the situation is still a problem, please contact the Homestay Coordinator.

## STUDENT HEALTH

**ALL** International Students are required to have insurance that covers their medical costs. The International Student Administrator keeps copies of insurance details for each student. Howick College has a health centre that students may visit during school if they feel unwell or hurt themselves.

The school also has available a trained Guidance Counsellor for any students who are feeling sad or homesick.

### **If your student is unwell and needs to see a doctor outside school**

Please arrange an appointment with your family doctor. If your student prefers to see a doctor who speaks their first language, there is a list in their Orientation Handbook, or they could ask their agent to find a doctor for them. Please remind your student to keep all receipts and paperwork from the doctor as they are sent with their insurance claim. The International Administration Manager is happy to help them with their claim.

Students are encouraged to speak to you, the Homestay Coordinator, teachers, or school counsellors if they have any problem. If you are concerned about your student's emotional or physical health, please contact the Homestay Coordinator.

**NOTE: Please do not allow students to contact their parents until their health has been assessed by a medical professional. Howick College will inform parents if there is a serious situation.**

## CHANGES TO HOMESTAYS

We take great care in placing a student in a homestay and try to ensure we match the student to the household that will best suit the student and family. Even though we place the student with the intention of them staying for the full time, there is no guarantee that this will always happen.

Sometimes students ask to be moved because of a minor issue that they would rather not face. We do encourage them to seek help to sort problems out and will work with them and you to try to resolve any issue. Please let us know if your circumstances change and you are no longer able to host your student, i.e., family returning home, illness, change in family circumstances or major home renovations. If you wish to take a holiday and your student is not going with you, please let us know so we can arrange an alternative homestay for them. We require at least two weeks' notice before a student is moved. If a student wishes to move to a new homestay, we will provide you with two weeks' notice. In some urgent cases, this may not be possible.

### Reasons for Leaving a Homestay

- Early return to home country
- Change in homestay circumstances
- Unacceptable behaviour from student toward homestay or serious breach of school rules
- Unacceptable behaviour from homestay towards student
- A mismatch of student and homestay
- Request from natural parents for student to live with a family member or guardian

## HOMESTAY PAYMENTS

Homestay payments are made on a fortnightly basis and are paid one week in advance and one week in arrears. Sometimes, if a payment is scheduled during the school holidays, the payment may be for more than usual.

Payments continue over the term holidays and during the end of year break if your student is not returning home during this time. If your student intends to return after the Christmas holidays, there will be a \$100 dollar payment to hold their room. If you wish to have the use of their room during their absence, please make sure they pack up their belongings before they leave to go home.

If you change bank accounts, please ensure you give us the new details.

**Thank you again for sharing your home and family with an  
International Student from Howick College.**