



## ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

### 1. Categories of Accommodation

1. As per the Accommodation of International Students Procedure, the school will accept the following categories of accommodation for students:
  - a. The student's parent or legal guardian
  - b. School homestay
  - c. Designated caregiver (DCG)
  - d. Temporary Accommodation with a supervisor
2. All accommodation categories will be as defined in Part 2 of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016. The accommodation supervisor in (b) to (f) above, may also be referred to as a residential caregiver, as per the Code definition.

### 2. Approval process for Student Accommodation

1. When completing the International Student Application Form, families will select the category of intended accommodation, and will supply details of the designated caregiver, where applicable. Students, or parents/legal guardians of students under 18, will also sign one of the following agreements:
  - a. Accommodation Agreement (if they select homestay)
  - b. Designated Caregiver Agreement (if they select DCG)
2. Agreements for students in a supervised group staying in temporary accommodation will be captured in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) pertaining to the group. Where the group supervisor in the accommodation is resident in New Zealand, they will be subject to full safety checking as for any other residential caregiver, and will be required to sign a written agreement with the school that specifies the role and responsibilities of each party in relation to the care of the student.
3. Where students in a supervised group will stay in temporary accommodation, Howick College will ensure that the contract-of-enrolment, signed by the parents and the school, acknowledges that the supervisor(s) will be responsible for the student's day-to-day care, and not the school.
4. The Assistant Director will be responsible for checking that the accommodation choice is captured, and the appropriate agreements have been signed before issuing an offer-of-place for the student, or that missing documentation is flagged for follow-up.
5. From time to time, students may change their minds about the category of accommodation, after an offer of place has been issued. In this case, the Administrator will ensure that appropriate agreements are signed, the accommodation is checked and approved by the school and will issue appropriate invoices if required.
6. Where students intend living with a parent/legal guardian, the school will establish contact with the parent on arrival in New Zealand and remind them of the requirements of their guardian visa:

- a. Parents on guardian visas caring for children older than 13 must obtain the school's prior approval if they intend to place the student in the care of any other person on a temporary basis so that the school may vet and approve the accommodation in advance.
7. Where students intend to live with a DCG, the school will contact the DCG prior to the issuing of an offer of place (if practicable – alternatively, as soon afterwards as possible) and arrange a vetting visit to their home at a mutually convenient time. The Homestay Coordinator will be responsible for arranging and conducting this vetting visit, including completing a Residential Caregiver Agreement, and recording the results of the vetting visit on eschool. If the DCG is found to be hosting 5 or more students who are in no way a family member or related to the owner, and is therefore a hostel under the definitions provided in the Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005 (<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2005/0332/7.0/whole.html>), the school will ensure that the hostel complies with all legislative requirements under the regulations, including:
  - a. The hostel holding a current license
  - b. The license being clearly displayed for the inspection of visitors
8. If the hostel does not appear to comply with the regulations, the school will not approve the accommodation, and will inform the student's family that they should make alternative accommodation arrangements. If the student is already living in the unlicensed hostel, the school will move the student to appropriate accommodation and invoice the parents for any relevant costs or take other measures in accordance with contract-of-enrolment agreements signed by the school and parents.
9. In the case of all residential caregivers, the Homestay Coordinator will ensure that both partners are subjected to the following safety checks:
  - a. Confirmation of identity (this will form part of the police vetting process)
  - b. Police vetting
  - c. Reference checking
  - d. An interview
  - e. A risk assessment based on (a – e) above
10. For students living with residential caregivers, the Homestay Coordinator will ensure that all adults (18 and over) living in the home consent to police vetting, including adults who live in the home periodically, such as over weekends or during university vacations.
11. For students living with residential caregivers, where adults (18 or over) may stay in the home on a temporary basis, the Homestay Coordinator will conduct a risk assessment and determine the need for safety checks based on factors such as the length of the visit, and other factors.
12. Results of all safety checks will be recorded on eschool.

### 3. Processes for the Recruitment, Vetting and Monitoring of School Homestays

#### Recruitment

1. Initial contact with the school may be in response to a recruitment advertisement, or a proactive enquiry. The Homestay Coordinator will send a Homestay Application Pack to the family. This pack will include:
  - Application to be a Homestay Family
  - Residential Caregiver Agreement
  - Homestay Guide for Host families

- Reference check
- Police Vetting forms for all adults in the home

### **Application Processing & Safety Checks**

2. Upon receipt of homestay application:
  - a. The Homestay Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the application via email within 2 days of receipt. The email will:
    - Thank the sender for the application.
    - Request any missing documentation.
    - If the family appears suitable, request a home visit and sight IDs during the visit.
  - b. Once IDs have been sighted and the family home visited, the Homestay Coordinator will lodge the police vetting applications online.
  - c. The Homestay Coordinator will open a file in eschool for the family. S/he will record the following information:
    - Family's contact information
    - Each person for which police vet has been lodged, and date of lodging
    - All paperwork received
  - d. The Homestay Coordinator will contact the supplied referees for a verbal reference (follow-up to the written one).
  - e. If the applicant has listed another institution from whom they currently host or previously hosted students, the Homestay Coordinator will contact this institution for a reference.

### **Initial Vetting Home-Visit**

3. The Homestay Coordinator will arrange to visit the Homestay at a mutually convenient time. If possible, both host parents should be present at the interview, and as many other family members as possible. In this way, the Homestay Coordinator may gain insight into family dynamics and the attitudes of different family members to having a student.
4. Prior to the interview, the Homestay Coordinator will check that all paperwork has been received. If any documents or signatures are missing, these may be obtained during the home visit.
5. The Homestay Coordinator will inspect all living rooms, the intended student's bedroom and bathroom. S/he will ascertain who occupies all other bedrooms, apart from the master bedroom, and will check that the number of beds matches the information given on family members and other occupants.
6. If the home is found to house (or is intended to house) 5 or more students in no way family members or related to the hosts, it is, by definition, a Hostel, and must be licensed. See comments under designated caregivers above. In this case, the Homestay Coordinator will alert the host parents to this fact and explain the need for them to obtain a license. In this event, the home cannot be approved as a school homestay.
7. If the home is found to host other short-term adults, such as for the purposes of Airbnb or other similar accommodation arrangements, the Homestay Coordinator will not approve the home as a school homestay, unless s/he is satisfied that there is sufficient separation of accommodation, and sufficient supervision, to protect the safety of international students.

8. The Homestay Coordinator will check that there will be sufficient separation of students and other home occupants of different ages and genders to provide a safe environment for international students.
9. The Homestay Coordinator will ask sufficient probing questions to establish the emotional maturity of host parents and their ability to provide a safe environment and sufficient supervision and support for students in their care.
10. The homestay should be recorded as either 'approved' or 'not approved' on the Application to be a Homestay Family form. On return to school, the Homestay Coordinator will record the results of the visit on eschool.
11. The Homestay Coordinator will take a camera/smart phone to the home visit. S/he will ask the host parents for consent to the taking of photographs of the home. One or two outside shots, one of the living area and one of the student's bedroom. The Homestay Coordinator will also take a photograph of any family members present, with their consent. If they prefer, or there are missing family members, they may email photographs to school. The Homestay Coordinator will save photographs electronically on eschool.

### **Homestay Monitoring**

12. The Homestay Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each homestay with a student staying there is visited twice per year. Where a student is enrolled for only one or two terms, the Homestay Coordinator will aim to visit once during that period. Where a student or family are having difficulties, the Homestay Coordinator will arrange extra visits as needed.
13. Where possible, monitoring visits will take place once the student has had a chance to settle in, but in the first half of their stay to avoid problems festering for too long.
14. The Homestay Coordinator will contact the host and make an appointment for the monitoring visit. The Homestay Coordinator will ensure that the primary caregiver of the student is present at the time of the visit.
15. The Homestay Coordinator will inspect the home and the student's bedroom and ensure that they remain of a high standard. They will check that no new occupants are living in the home that the school is unaware of.
16. After the interview, the Homestay Coordinator will inform the Assistant Director of any concerns or issues that need to be followed up at school.
17. The Homestay Coordinator may also use the monitoring visit as an opportunity to obtain feedback from host parents, which will feed into the school's self-review process. This feedback will be recorded in eschool.
18. The Homestay Coordinator will keep records of homestay monitoring visits in eschool.

### **Designated Caregiver (DCG) Monitoring**

19. The Homestay Coordinator will visit DCGs prior to, or soon after, the student's acceptance and again during Term 3, or more often if there is any concern over the environment and care being provided. Interviews and other conversations with students will provide an opportunity to monitor a satisfactory level of care, and the continued presence of the DCG in New Zealand.
20. The Homestay Coordinator will ensure that the DCG signs a Residential Caregiver Agreement.

## Telephone Calls

21. Telephone calls that take place between homestay parents and the school, where aspects of concern or conflict involving the student are discussed, will be documented, and recorded in eschool under Contact History.

## Student Termly Interviews

22. The Homestay Coordinator will interview each student twice per year. If possible, an interview will take place prior to the 6-monthly monitoring visit, when one is due, so that any issues of concern to the student, may be followed up during the visit.
23. The Interview will take place in a private space so that the student feels free to speak openly.

## 4. Placement

1. The Homestay Coordinator will be responsible for allocating students to host families. In doing so, the most important guiding principle will be the best interest of the student. The Homestay Coordinator will consider the following:
  - The requests of students/parents or agents
  - The requests of host parents
  - The interests and preferred lifestyles of students and host families
  - The ages and genders of students and the occupants of the home
  - Medical or other needs, dietary requirements and allergies
  - Attitudes to pets and religion, where relevant
2. Once a student has been matched with a host family, the Homestay Coordinator will contact the host family and confirm that they are willing to host the student.
3. Once confirmed, the Homestay Coordinator will send placement information in writing to the host family and the student.
4. Information to the family will include (if known):
  - The student's name, age, nationality
  - The names and occupations of the student's parents
  - What siblings the student has and their ages
  - An email address for the student and/or his or her family
  - The student's interests and intended activities in NZ
  - Any allergies or special needs or dietary requirements
  - The student's intended arrival and departure dates (may be approximate)
  - Copies of any available photographs of the student and his/her family as well as the student's letter to the host family (if available)
  - The school's 24-hour emergency number
  - Homestay Family Guidebook
5. Information to the student will include:
  - Names, ages, and genders of all family members and home occupants
  - Family members' occupations and interests
  - A brief description of the home and family
  - The address of the home and distance from school
  - How they will be transported to school and any costs
  - Contact details for the host parents including telephone numbers and email addresses
  - Photograph of the family
  - Photos/details of the home and facilities available to the student
  - Arrangements for airport collection on arrival

6. Provided the student's application is received early enough, the school will try to provide placement information to international students no later than 6 weeks before their departure from their home country.
7. If the school was unable to meet special requests, the Homestay Coordinator will explain this to the family/agent.
8. Other than an emergency, no student will be placed with a host family until all paperwork has been received, references have been checked, a home visit conducted, and police vetting completed. In an emergency situation where there is no vetted homestay available, the school will try to place students with a family known to the school where risk can be managed, and they have been recently police vetted such as a teacher or employee of the school. It should be noted that teachers are vetted at a lower level than host parents, so this option should be reserved for emergencies only, where no fully vetted caregiver is available.

## **5. Arrival**

1. The most important goal of the arrangements we make for the arrival of the student to New Zealand, is that the student is warmly welcomed and made to feel wanted and at home with their host family. Students can feel very anxious about their arrival, so arrangements will be confirmed as promptly and clearly as possible.
2. As soon as the school has the student's date and time of arrival and flight number, the Homestay Coordinator will arrange for the student to be met at the airport by a school staff member or host parents. The Homestay Coordinator will inform the host family of the student's arrival details and meet-and-greet arrangements, and will confirm with the student's family or agent the person who will meet them at the airport and the person and school's contact telephone numbers in the case of any difficulties.
3. If the host family is meeting the student, the Homestay Coordinator will speak to them regularly before arrival, confirming dates and times, and message them the day before arrival to remind them and confirm that they will be there to meet the student.
4. The person meeting the plane will arrive at the airport in good time. They will hold a sign with the student's name on it.
5. The Homestay Coordinator will phone the homestay the day after arrival to check how the student is settling in and to answer any questions that may have come up on either side.

## **6. Homestay Payment Procedures**

Host families will be paid one week in advance and one week in arrears.

## **7. Responding to Students unhappy in Homestay/DCG environments**

- (55) Where students report being unhappy with their homestay placements, the Homestay Coordinator (and if necessary, Assistant Director) will speak to both student, and residential caregiver and, if necessary, both together, and try to find a resolution to the problems that both students and caregivers are happy with.

At all stages of this process, the Homestay coordinator will keep agent or parents/legal guardians informed on what action the school is taking to address the issues, and on the wellbeing of the student.

- (56) Where attempts at resolution and mediation fail, and the student or caregiver is still not happy, or where the relationship has broken down past the point of

repair, the school will find alternative accommodation for the student. This may sometimes require a temporary placement, to keep the student in safe accommodation until a new home is found.

- (57) Where the student is living with a designated caregiver, the school will seek the agreement of the parents to a move. This can be difficult as the parents may not have an alternative designated caregiver available and may not wish to pay homestay fees. However, if the school deems a designated caregiver has become unsuitable, or the environment is not conducive to the student's physical and/or emotional safety, an alternative must be found, or the student will be returned home.
- (58) Where the school has serious concerns over the caregiver, they will report them to relevant authorities such as the NZ Police or Oranga Tamariki.