



St John's College

HAMILTON | NZ

Welcome to

St John's College Hamilton

Homestay Information Guide for

International Students



Welcome from SJC,

We extend a warm welcome to you as an international student at St. John's College. The homestay experience offers valuable opportunities, and we have full confidence that your residence with the selected host family will be both rewarding and enriching. Each of our host families has undergone a thorough interview and evaluation process by the International Department, and many of them have previously hosted international students, allowing us to have a deep understanding of their capabilities. Furthermore, all host families are equipped with a comprehensive "Guide to Hosting

International Students," which they will use to explain essential information to you, alongside clarifying the details outlined in this Student Guide. In the latter part of this guide, there is designated space for your homestay parents to outline their specific household rules. It's important to note that every family has its unique rules and expectations.

A harmonious relationship between students and their host families hinges on mutual understanding of each other's needs. The initial weeks following your arrival may require some time and adjustments from both sides. Living in a foreign country often entails encountering diverse housing arrangements, unfamiliar cuisines, customs, attitudes, and ways of life. You might experience occasional homesickness and find the local people and language to be unfamiliar. These feelings are perfectly normal, and it's crucial to remind yourself that you are here to embrace a different culture. Living with a host family provides an exceptional opportunity to enhance your language skills and fully immerse yourself in this new cultural experience.

Living with a New Zealand family is an excellent opportunity for you to immerse yourself in our New Zealand way of life and significantly enhance your English language proficiency. Your host family will extend a warm welcome, and upon your initial arrival, they will assist you in familiarizing yourself with the city and your school.

It's important to anticipate differences between your home country's customs and lifestyle and those of New Zealand. Since you have chosen to come to New Zealand, it's essential to be open to making some adjustments to ensure your happiness while residing here. All homestays undergo thorough assessments by the school, ensuring not only a welcoming and comfortable home environment but also the provision of the utmost care.

Outlined below are some guidelines to help you understand what to expect when living with a New Zealand family:

Your Accommodation

Your placement with a family will be carefully selected to align as closely as possible with your preferences and requirements. You'll be provided with your own room, and your host family will make you feel like an integral part of their household. They will ensure that you have a cooked dinner in the evenings and that food is readily available for your breakfast and lunch. Typically, New Zealand breakfasts consist of toast or cereal, which you can prepare yourself. Additionally, you'll have the flexibility to make sandwiches or a suitable alternative for your lunch.

It's worth noting that many New Zealand households have pets, commonly a cat and occasionally a dog. If you have any specific likes or dislikes regarding pets, your host family should already be aware of them based on the information you provided in your application form.

For your safety and well-being, the school will not permit you to reside in a place without an adult homestay parent or caregiver present. This ensures that you have a responsible and supportive presence throughout your stay.

Your Room

At your new house in New Zealand you will have:

- A comfortable bed
- A desk to do homework
- A wardrobe and a place for your clothes
- A heater, etc.

Your bedroom will be your personal and private space, similar to how the bedrooms of other family members are their private areas. It's important to respect their privacy and not enter their rooms unless specifically invited to do so. Your host family will provide you with more detailed information about this and give you a tour of the house when you arrive, ensuring that you are familiar with the household's boundaries and arrangements.

Your host family will explain this to you in more detail and show you around the house when you arrive.

How can I keep warm at night?

In New Zealand, it's important to note that most houses do not have central heating systems. Instead, they may rely on alternatives like heat pumps or wood burners for warmth. In your bedroom, you will be provided with a heater, but it's essential to check with your host family about its usage guidelines. Heaters can pose significant safety risks if left on for extended periods, so it's crucial never to leave them on when you are not in the room or when you go out, as this could potentially lead to a fire hazard.

Staying warm during the winter months is vital, and you should wear warm clothing inside the house. Layering with materials like wool and thermals can help keep you cozy and comfortable.

Additionally, you may also have access to an electric blanket, which is placed under your bed sheet. You can turn it on before bedtime to warm up your bed, but always remember to turn it off before you go to sleep to ensure safety.

Laundry and washing

In many households, the host parent is typically more than willing to assist with your laundry, and they will have a conversation with you to discuss the arrangements. However, it's important to avoid hanging wet laundry or washing in your bedroom, over a heater, or in the closet/wardrobe. Your host parent will likely provide you with a bag or basket for your laundry needs. Additionally, your host family will supply towels if you need them and will either change your bed sheets or provide you with fresh sheets for your use. This is typically done on a weekly basis in most homes.

In New Zealand, it's common for families to hang their laundry outside to dry. You may also be asked to hang out your own washing as part of your responsibilities within the household.

The Bathroom

New Zealand bathrooms may have different features compared to those in your home country. Notably, there is typically no floor drainage, so it's essential to avoid getting water on the floor. It's advisable to have a conversation with your host family to understand the proper use of the bath and shower facilities.

Furthermore, it's important to be mindful of your water usage in the shower and not linger for an excessive amount of time. Electricity costs can be high, and prolonged showers can deplete the hot water supply, leaving other family members without access. Typically, a 10-minute shower is considered sufficient.

You are responsible for supplying your own toiletries, including items such as shampoo, conditioner, and the like. If you require a hair dryer or straighteners, you will need to bring your own or purchase them during your stay, as they may not be provided by the host family.

Hints for you!

Keep your room tidy—it is your responsibility, not your host parents.

Don't eat food in your room or leave dirty dishes there as this can attract flies and insects.

Don't be embarrassed to talk to your host family about washing etc—most of them have hosted before and are used to all sorts of questions.

Don't spend all your time in your room. Make sure you are out with your new family in the living room for at least part of every evening.

Food

Your homestay fee includes all meals:

- Breakfast
- Lunches
- Dinner
- Snacks, etc.

New Zealanders have a diverse culinary palate and commonly enjoy "international" cuisine. Supermarkets and specialty stores in New Zealand readily offer a wide variety of international food supplies. It's often a good idea to accompany your host parent to the supermarket and introduce them to some of the foods you prefer to eat.

Since the main meal of the day is typically consumed in the evening, having a hearty breakfast is crucial. Don't hesitate to express your preferences and needs, such as portion sizes, by saying "Thank you, that's enough" if you're satisfied.

During the weekends, it's common for lunches and dinners to be more casual and smaller in size. If you find yourself still hungry, please communicate this to your host family. If you encounter any food-related issues or feel uncomfortable discussing them with your host family, don't hesitate to reach out to the Dean of International Students or the Homestay Coordinator for assistance and support. Your well-being is a top priority, and there are resources available to help address any concerns you may have regarding food.

Mealtimes

In New Zealand households, mealtimes are a significant part of family life. Family members gather to share meals and engage in conversations about their day's experiences. It is customary and expected that you will join the family at these designated mealtimes.

If, for any reason, you anticipate being late for a meal, it's essential to communicate with your homestay parents by phoning them to inform them of your delay. Likewise, if you plan to be away for a meal, it's necessary to discuss this with your homestay family in advance, preferably in the morning or the day before, and obtain their permission to be absent for that meal.

While New Zealand cuisine may differ from what you're accustomed to, it's encouraged to be open and try everything that is offered to you. If you discover that you don't enjoy certain dishes, kindly inform your homestay family so that they can provide you with alternative options.

Additionally, it's important to follow the guidance of your homestay mother concerning social etiquette, including table manners such as not slurping or burping during meals. Practicing good manners is highly valued, so remember to use phrases like "please" and "thank you" when appropriate. Maintaining proper hygiene is crucial, so be sure to wash your hands after using the

toilet and before handling food. Lastly, be considerate of the needs and preferences of other family members to contribute to a harmonious living environment.

Here is an overview of typical mealtime schedules:

Breakfast (7:00 - 9:00 am): Breakfast is typically a casual affair in most New Zealand households. Family members help themselves to toast and cereals. Cooked breakfasts are usually reserved for special occasions.

Lunch (12:00 - 2:00 pm): Students in New Zealand often take a packed lunch to school, consisting of sandwiches, fruit, muesli bars, and similar items.

Dinner (after 5:30 pm): Dinner is typically enjoyed at the dining table, and it's an important time for family conversation. At St. John's College, students are expected to be home for dinner each night with their host family, usually between 6:00 - 7:30 pm. If you cannot make it home for dinner for any reason, it's essential to communicate with your host family in advance. If you are invited to have dinner at a friend's house, make sure to ask your host family for permission as they may have prepared dinner for you.

Cooking

Ask your host family if you want to cook. Perhaps your hosts would like to try food from your country, and you can cook for them something you enjoy at home.

Hints for you!

Most host families in New Zealand make a genuine effort to prepare meals that they believe you will enjoy. If there's something you cannot eat, it's important to communicate your preferences to your family. Additionally, it's highly appreciated to express gratitude and appreciation when your host parents have gone the extra mile to prepare a special meal for you.

Don't hesitate to embrace new culinary experiences and try different foods during your stay.

Furthermore, offering to help with meal-related tasks is a great way to contribute to the household and show your appreciation. You can participate by:

- Setting the table
- Clearing the table
- Assisting with dishwashing, etc.

In New Zealand families, it's common for everyone to pitch in with dinner chores, and as a member of the family during your stay, offering your help is a way to integrate and be part of the household. It's a gesture that demonstrates your willingness to be an active and considerate member of the family.

Driving / Travelling in a car/ Riding a bicycle and scooter

You may not drive or own a motor vehicle whilst enrolled at St John's College as an international student. Road safety in New Zealand is covered in the school's orientation programme. You must consult with the Dean of International Students regarding the use of motor vehicles. Anyone with a Restricted Licence may not carry passengers nor be on the road between the hours of 10.00 pm and 6.00 am.

Travel outside of in cars with other teenagers for day trips is NOT allowed. If you go on a day trip you must be with a responsible adult driver.

You must use the safety belt when travelling in the car at all times whether you are seated in the front or the back of the car.

If you ride a bicycle and scooter in New Zealand you must wear a safety helmet [this is a law and you can be stopped if you are not wearing one and given a fine]. You should also always lock your bicycle as they can be stolen.

School Travel Policy

During your time as an international student at St. John's College, it's important to note that unsupervised overnight travel is not permitted. For any overnight trips, you must obtain permissions from the school, unless it is with your host family or part of a school-organized trip. To request permission for supervised travel, you will need to complete and have the Travel Form signed by both your natural parents and your host parents at least two weeks before the planned travel date.

The school also organizes several supervised holiday trips during school breaks, and students are encouraged to participate in these opportunities. These trips offer a great way to explore and experience different aspects of New Zealand while ensuring your safety and well-being during your stay.

Insurance

For all international students at St. John's College, having both medical and travel insurance is a mandatory requirement, as outlined in the application documents. If you already have insurance from your home country, it's essential to keep a copy with you and provide a copy to the school for their records.

If St. John's College arranges your insurance, you will receive a copy when you first arrive. In the event that you need to make a claim, you can seek assistance from Mrs. Skelton at the International Department. She will be available to provide guidance and support throughout the claims process to ensure your needs are met.

Medical

While you are in New Zealand, you have the option to choose between visiting your host family's doctor or requesting the school's recommendation for a local doctor. In the event that you become ill, it's crucial to inform your host family and promptly contact the school.

If your host family is unable to take you to the doctor due to work commitments, the international staff at the school will arrange for your transportation. Additionally, the school has first-aid trained staff available to provide immediate assistance and support if needed, ensuring your well-being and access to medical care during your stay.

Family Dinner and Catching Up

In New Zealand, it's common for families to have dinner together and use this time to catch up on each other's day. After dinner, many people relax by watching television.

Going Out

Families in New Zealand often go out to movies, restaurants, and other activities on weekends, but not as much during the week.

International students must follow certain rules when going out during the week:

- Ask your host family for permission and inform them about where you're going and who you'll be with.
- Your host family should have contact information for your friends' families.
- Discuss transportation arrangements with your host family.
- Be home at the specified time, especially if there are other teenagers in the house with the same rules.
- Carry a charged cell phone and some cash for emergencies, like taking a taxi home.
- Prioritize safety and respect.

Inviting Friends Home

If you want to invite friends over to your host family's house, talk to your host family first to ensure it's convenient.

Fitting Into Your Family

- Treat your host family's house as your home while respecting the presence of other family members.
- Understand and adhere to the house rules set by your host family.
- Take responsibility for the tidiness of your room.
- Contribute to the security of the house by locking up and closing windows.
- Be punctual for meals.
- Safely use all household appliances.
- Keep your host family informed about your whereabouts.
- Respect both your host family's rules and the school's rules regarding smoking and alcohol.

Hints for you!

These additional points about politeness, safety, and communication are crucial for international students staying with host families in New Zealand:

1. Use Polite Language:

Always use "please" and "thank you" when interacting with your host family and others. Politeness is highly valued in New Zealand.

2. Security Measures:

Ensure that you lock the house and close your bedroom window securely when you leave the house. This is essential for safety and security.

3. Cell Phone Readiness:

Keep your cell phone charged and readily available. It's an important means of communication and can be crucial in emergencies.

4. Punctuality and Communication:

If you anticipate being late and cannot make it home at the arranged time, call your hosts instead of texting. This direct communication ensures they are informed and not worried about your well-being.

Financial Safety, Pocket Money, Responsibility and other matters

Safety and financial responsibility are important aspects of living as an international student in New Zealand. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

1. Financial Safety

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash with you.

Your host family will help you open a bank account, and you will be given an Eftpos card. Keep your PIN number secret and do not share it with anyone or write it down.

In case of a lost wallet, stolen bank card, or theft of property, take these steps:

Contact the Police and file a report within 24 hours.

Contact your bank to cancel your card.

Notify your host family and a staff member of the International Department.

2. Personal Safety

If you are walking alone, especially late at night, it's safer to walk with a friend.

Consult your host family about areas of town that may be less safe at night.

Always inform your host family about your plans, including where you are going, who you will be with, and your expected return time.

3. Financial Responsibility

You will be responsible for covering expenses related to entertainment, clothing, toiletries, stationery, bus fares, and other personal items while you are in New Zealand.

4. Work

It's great to know the rules and regulations regarding work for international students studying in Year 12 or 13 in New Zealand. You are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during the school year and during the Christmas and New Year holiday break, you can work full-time with proper permissions from your school and parents. You must get the conditions of your student visa to allow for work from Immigration New Zealand.

5. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted at school and in your homestay.

6. Drinking

Drinking alcohol is not allowed in a homestay. It is illegal in New Zealand for anyone under the age of 18 years to be served alcohol or to be on licensed premises.

7. Holiday arrangements

There are three two-week holiday breaks each year, along with the extended summer break in December and January. If you choose to remain with your homestay during the term holidays, you are expected to make the regular weekly payments. To ensure smooth coordination, it's essential that you notify the International Office well in advance of the end of each term regarding your holiday plans or any intended changes in your accommodation. You will be required to complete the necessary forms for this purpose.

Adhering to these guidelines empowers you to safeguard both your personal safety and financial security throughout your tenure as an international student in New Zealand. It is crucial to remain vigilant and responsible in overseeing your finances and implementing safety measures.

These guidelines serve as the foundation for establishing a harmonious living environment and guaranteeing your safety and well-being during your stay as an international student in New Zealand. Effective communication and a profound respect for your host family's rules and cultural norms are pivotal for a successful experience at St. John's and in the wider context of New Zealand.



Getting Support

At St. John's College, a dedicated network of compassionate teachers and staff is committed to ensuring your school experience is both enjoyable and fulfilling. In addition to your form class teacher, you'll have access to Deans, a Guidance Counsellors, and the International Office staff, all of whom are here to support your academic journey and personal well-being.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

PREPARING YOUNG MEN FOR LIFE