

## **HOMESTAY GUIDE**

*Welcome to the Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program! This information has been designed to explain our Homestay Program and outline some basic rules and expectations the International Education Program has for all its participants.*

Please note that the rules and expectations that follow do not cover all situations. They do, however, provide sufficient information for the international students and their Homestay Hosts to make solid decisions in the spirit of Turtle Mountain School Division International Education guidelines and policies. Certain rules and expectations are very precise and imperative, while others call for judgment on the part of the international students and their Homestay Hosts.

As in life, Homestay Hosts like biological parents, cannot always rely on rigid rules, but often they must take risks and make decisions based on their understanding of the situation and the maturity of their international student.

### **BASIC RULES and EXPECTATIONS**

Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program has established certain rules which protect both the international student, the Homestay Host, and the Turtle Mountain School Division. Please read this publication carefully and in its entirety to ensure you understand the basic rules and expectations of our Program.

International students and Homestay Hosts will also be given further written detailed information about specific topics once the international student arrives. This information will assist in dealing with certain topics that are too lengthy to include in this publication. International students and Homestay Hosts are encouraged to discuss any of these topics with our Homestay Coordinator or Canadian Custodian if they require further clarification.

### **HOMESTAY – A SAFE AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT**

Turtle Mountain School Division has a list of local families who have been screened and deemed able to provide an appropriate and healthy environment for an international student. Families undergo a criminal and child abuse background check to ensure the safety of the international student. Families are also interviewed and their homes visited by International Education Program personnel to assess interest, friendliness and concern for the growth and development of the international student. The emphasis is on a home that provides the international student with comfortable surroundings and a place for practicing and developing English language skills.

The International Education Program works hard to ensure that international students are placed with Homestay Hosts who best match the needs of the international student.

Despite the International Education Program's best efforts, "perfect matches", including all requested specifications by the international student and/or the Homestay Host, may not always be available.

### **HOMESTAY FEES**

International students residing with Homestay Hosts are required to pay a monthly provincially recommended Homestay Fee. This fee is to be paid before arrival for the entire term to 5170176 Manitoba Limited.

Homestay fees are not negotiable between the international student and the Homestay Host. The fees outlined by the Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program must be adhered to at all times.

Please note that Homestay fees will not be pro-rated during a month when an international student chooses to travel. As when one rents an apartment and full rent payments continue during vacation and travel, full Homestay fees will be required from the international student during similar circumstances.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S ROLE IN THE FAMILY**

It has been determined that the Homestay environment provides the greatest opportunity for the learning and the acquisition of the English language. It is also the ideal setting for learning new skills and experiencing Canadian life. Our International Education Homestay Program aims to integrate the international student as a regular family member as much as possible. The international student should not expect to be treated as an "honoured guest"; instead, he or she will be included in family activities like a regular member of the family.

As such, the international student will be expected to complete his or her share of household chores the same as the other children in the family. For instance, he or she will be responsible to keep the bedroom clean, in addition to maintaining tidiness in other areas of the house. The international student should also be prepared to help with some meal preparation, the cleaning of dishes, and perhaps even doing his or her own laundry. More detailed information pertaining to this will be provided to the international student upon arrival and will be discussed with the Homestay Host, international student and Canadian Custodian every month.

All forms of household chores and work are, in fact, excellent learning opportunities and sharing moments between family members. The Homestay Host must discuss these responsibilities with the international student and explain expectations during the stay.

It is recommended that the Homestay Host sits down with its international student shortly after his/her arrival and clearly outlines expectations at that time. These expectations need to be written down so they can be reviewed with the Canadian Custodian. It is also important that the Homestay Host adhere to expectations set. Otherwise there may be confusion or a perception of "mixed messages" on the part of the international student regarding his/her responsibilities in the home. In short, the Homestay Host must "follow through" with responsibilities outlined so the international student is not confused about the expectations.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF HOMESTAY HOSTS**

The international student shall expect the following from the Homestay Host.

1. A private or shared bedroom
  - a. nearby smoke detector – fire drill procedures to be explained
  - b. bed and bedding, dresser, desk, chair, lamp, closet
  - c. adequate heat, light and ventilation
  - d. discuss with your international student(s) what can be put on bedroom walls and how to attach items.
2. Access to bathroom and bathing facilities. (International students are aware that we cannot guarantee private bathroom facilities).

3. Three meals daily in the home and other reasonable incidental foodstuffs. Please discuss with your international student who is responsible for meal preparations, etc.
4. Access to laundry facilities and procedures/routines. (Remember that the operation of the washing machine and dryer will need to be explained and demonstrated if international students are to do their own laundry).
5. Fire extinguishers, especially in the kitchen, are advised.

The Homestay Host will also meet reasonable transportation needs. **This does not include daily transportation to and from school.**

***The Homestay Fee does not cover extracurricular school costs. Homestay Hosts are expected to include the international student in local family outings.***

### **PRIME EXPECTATIONS OF HOMESTAY HOSTS**

- \* The Canadian Custodian will meet your international student at the airport.
- \* Be sure to provide your international student with a key to the house as well as telephone numbers where you can be reached during working hours.
- \* Always speak English when your international student is present and encourage him/her to speak only English in your family's presence.
- \* Invite your international student to join in family activities and help him/her to adjust to our Canadian culture.
- \* Take an interest in your international student's school activities and new friends.
- \* Treat your international student with respect and acceptance.
- \* Inform your international student if you will be away for a meal.
- \* Notify the Canadian Custodian if any difficulties or concerns arise about your international student.
- \* Inform the Canadian Custodian if you or your international student plan to travel from home during his/her Homestay period.

### **REPORTING FAMILY CHANGES**

If there is a change in your family status, you must let the Canadian Custodian know in order to keep files up-to-date.

Examples include:

- \* When a Homestay Host family member turns 18 during the time the family hosts for Turtle Mountain School Division.
- \* Criminal Record and Child Abuse Registry checks must be submitted to our office for all persons over the age of 18 who reside in the home during the time a family hosts an international student.
- \* If you host other students through any university or private language school programs along with Turtle Mountain School Division international students.
- \* If you receive guests, either extended family members or out-of-town friends, etc., who intend to stay in your home for an extended period of time during the time you host an international student. Longer-term visitors over age 18 are also required to provide Criminal Record as well as Child Abuse Registry checks.

## **CHANGING FAMILIES/PROBLEMS**

In cases where the international student and/or the Homestay Host desire a change, or in cases where rules are not followed, or deemed to be too harsh, the international student or Homestay Host may contact the Canadian Custodian. The Canadian Custodian will assess the situation and together with the international student and/or the Homestay Host, will determine a reasonable solution for all parties. An acceptable resolution that involves a change in Homestay may require some time to arrange.

***Casual requests by international students to change families will not be entertained. Requests supported by evidence of a problem will be seriously considered and handled in the manner outlined above.***

The Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program reserves the right to terminate a Homestay Host's participation in the Homestay Program if the family does not meet the requirements or criteria of the Program.

If international students or Homestay Hosts have questions or concerns regarding Homestay practices and procedures, they should contact Program personnel directly.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Turtle Mountain School Division Policies apply to all our international students. Each school has Codes of Conduct that students must adhere to as well.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/REPORTS**

Regular school attendance is expected of all international students participating in the International Education Program. Classes missed due to illness must be documented by either a note from the Homestay Host or from a doctor unless the student is 18 or over. Unexcused absences will be reported to the Homestay Host.

Student Report Cards, Progress Reports, and Attendance Reports must be presented to Homestay Hosts and shared with the Canadian Custodian. Homestay Hosts also have the privilege of attending Parent-Teacher (student-led conferencing) Meetings to discuss the performance of the international student and will be notified when these are scheduled throughout the school year.

## **MAKING SOCIAL PLANS**

While academic study and English language development are the principal goals of the International Education Program, group interaction and socializing are also important elements to a successful stay in the Program. International students should set aside a regular amount of time each week for leisure activities and relaxation. Much of this time will be with members of the Homestay Host family, although activities with school friends are also important.

Regardless, all international students under 18 must provide detailed information to their Homestay Host as to where they are going and how they can be reached (i.e. phone number), when they will be back, and with whom they are going out. Communication with the Homestay Host is important to prevent confusion and misunderstandings. To avoid confusion, the student needs to ask the Homestay Host to write his/her plans on the calendar. If international students are going to be later than planned, they must contact their Homestay Host by telephone immediately!

Also, international students under 18 should ask for permission before going out, as opposed to simply informing their Homestay Host that they are going out. The Homestay Host can enforce limits on the amount of socializing the international student(s) may do, and the hours of socialization they keep. The Homestay Host home is not to be treated as a hotel where individuals are at liberty to “come and go” as they please.

International students must ask a Homestay parent if one of their friends may be invited home with them from school.

### **CURFEWS**

As a regular member of the Homestay Host family, international students must respect the individual rules of the household. This includes the hours they are able to spend outside the home. Factors determining this may include; school night vs. weekend; type of activity and ages of the international students.

International students should be reminded to phone their Homestay Host if there is a problem or if they are going to be later than an agreed time. Special arrangements can be made for certain circumstances. As international students will be expected to complete homework assignments and study, it is recommended that Homestay Hosts ensure the student’s (under 18 years of age) homework is done before playing.

### **SLEEPOVERS**

Sleeping over at a friend’s house during the week is not permitted and on weekends must be approved by the Homestay Host and the Canadian Custodian. International students must provide the full name, address and telephone number of the home in which they will spend the night. The Homestay Host and the international student will agree upon an expected time of return home the next day.

### **SPENDING MONEY**

The International Education Program discourages its students from carrying or displaying large amounts of cash and monies. For security purposes, a personal bank account will be opened by international students who study here for the full year program. The Homestay Host will assist the international student in opening a personal chequing account at a local bank or credit union.

International students should be reminded not to lend money to or borrow money from Homestay Host members or other students.

### **LEISURE AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

International students will be expected to pay for all leisure sport activities such as, movies, concerts, fairs, hockey/baseball games, etc.

### **PERSONAL SPENDING/ALLOWANCE**

International students are responsible for buying their own; fashion clothing, cosmetics, haircuts and other personal effects, gifts such as birthday and Christmas presents for friends, rink food, snack food, and school lunches, postage for their letters and long-distance calls.

## **FAMILY EXPENSES**

The following are in consultation with the biological parents and not included in program fees: dental and optometric fees, extended holiday travel.

The cost of living in Manitoba is generally quite reasonable. International students are also responsible for monitoring their own budget.

## **CLOTHING**

It is the responsibility of the international student to bring and/or purchase appropriate clothing. It is recommended that international students wait until they arrive in Winnipeg to purchase winter boots and ski pants.

International students have the right to their own taste in clothing. They are, however, required to follow the same guidelines in "appropriate dress" at school as our Canadian students. Homestay Hosts should not try to change the international student's tastes. Their advice on dressing for our difficult winters is definitely helpful, however.

## **SHOWERS/BATHS**

International students must respect the needs of all Homestay Host family members. The length of a shower/bath and the time of day for a shower or bath must be mutually agreeable within each family. It is suggested that a reasonable showering time is approximately 3-10 minutes, as longer showers tend to drain the hot water tank. If there is not sufficient hot water for all family members who need to shower in succession, this can create problems. Homestay Hosts will set the length of showers.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

The rules of the household in regard to the use of the telephone must be obeyed, specifically pertaining to the length of the call, when calls are made and to whom.

International students are responsible for **all** costs incurred in relation to long distance telephone calls. International students must also let their Homestay Host know when they have made a long distance call. Long distance calls **MUST** be made with a phone card. Ci Ci phone cards are recommended.

## **USE OF INTERNET**

As most Canadian homes now have computers and the internet is easily accessed, your international student will wish to stay in contact with family and friends through this medium.

Internet access is considered part of the expectation of hosting an international student. Homestay Hosts must be willing and able to provide internet access in their home for international students and cannot charge extra fees over and above the monthly Homestay fee.

It is important to establish appropriate times when your international student as well as other family members can access the internet. You should, however, discourage your international student from spending an excessive amount of time on the internet.

## RELIGION

Homestay Host families and international students must show mutual respect for each other's religious beliefs. International students have the right to practice their own religion and Homestay Host families should make every effort to assist the international student in attending religious services of their choosing. International students may also accompany their Homestay Hosts family to religious services and activities, if they wish. Please note that Homestay Host families do not have the right to insist that international students attend religious services or church activities with them.

## HEALTH CARE

1. All international students are required to enrol in Turtle Mountain's International Student Medical Insurance Plan.
2. International students will be issued a membership card and will receive the complete medical coverage that is provided by the Medical Insurance Plan.
3. Please refer to your copy of the Medical Insurance Plan in the Homestay Folder; it provides full details of the coverage
4. Please be aware that some medical services may not be covered (i.e. holistic practitioners, fees for eye checkups, prescriptions for glasses or contact lenses, elective surgery, transportation by ambulance and dental care).
5. Any cost incurred is the immediate responsibility of the international student. Our insurance company will reimburse the international student after receipts have been forwarded to them. Please be aware that at the time of the visit, the physician may bill the international student directly.
6. Our insurance company provides all international students with a wallet-sized identification card, which facilitates visits to the doctor or the hospital. The doctor or hospital may refuse to bill our insurance provider directly. Thus, the international student must pay the bill at the time of the visit. He/she will, however, be reimbursed **in full** by our insurance provider, as long as the original bill, medical report and pharmacy bills are sent to them on the forms provided.

## ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTS

Homestay Host parents do not need authorization to take the international student to a doctor or hospital. However, we ask that you notify the Canadian Custodian of any hospitalization for physical or other illness and for serious accidents.

Also, if the international student must undergo any type of surgery, the Homestay Host family must contact the Canadian Custodian immediately. If the international student is injured in a car or traffic accident, we ask the Homestay Host family and the international student **not** to sign any form discharging the parties of responsibility, and forward names of the people to the Canadian Custodian immediately.

***In case of a serious emergency or an accident, the Canadian Custodian and Turtle Mountain School Division personnel must be contacted before the biological parents. The international student and Homestay Host family can count on us for support and comfort.***

***The Health Care Insurance provider needs to be contacted at their toll-free number before any medical procedures.***

## **TRAVEL**

Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program realizes that an international student sees travel as a chance to get to know Canada better. However, it is primarily through immersion in family life and in school that international students learn about Canada and various aspects of Canadian culture.

Although international students often wish to explore and experience North American culture through personal travel during their stay, this travel must not interfere with academic studies and should be limited to designated school holiday periods.

In order to help international students and their Homestay Host families make rational, coherent and fair decisions, Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program has established policy guidelines concerning travel.

1. International students must abide by the laws of Canada. Any international student who breaks a law could be sent home early, without tuition refund.
2. International students must respect the values of Canadian society, both while residing in Killarney and with the Homestay Host family and while travelling. If the international student shows disregard for the values of Canadian society or repeatedly breaks important traditions, it might be a sign that the international student is unable to adapt to life in Canada. This may result in expulsion from the Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program.
3. A "Parental Permission to Travel" form must be completed and signed by the biological parents for each extended trip not associated with the Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program for those students under 18 years of age.
4. All international students must furnish the Canadian Custodian personnel with a detailed itinerary of their travels, including the names and addresses of those with whom they will be travelling and where they will stay during their travels. (See form at the end of this document).
5. The Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program assumes no responsibility for international student actions during such travel.
6. Travel outside of Canada is discouraged. Typically it involves securing a Visitor's Visa to the destination country. Since most of these visas require written permission from the biological parents, visas must be revised prior to leaving the home country.
7. Precise details of our policy guidelines related to travel will be related to each international student under 18 and his/her Homestay Host family upon arrival. A sample copy of the "Parental Permission to Travel" is included in this document for reference purposes.
8. Many Homestay Host families may want to include the international students in their own travel and holiday plans. Students are encouraged to participate in such travels. Please note that travel within Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario with the Homestay Host does not require biological parental permission but Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program personnel should be informed. However, all travel by students under 18 outside these areas with the Homestay Host family will require permission from the biological parents.

### **FAMILY VISITS**

Homestay families are under no obligation to provide accommodation for visiting families of international students. We recommend visiting parents arrange motel or hotel accommodations during their visits.

### **SMOKING IN THE HOME**

In Canada it is illegal to sell cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18. Students are not allowed to smoke in schools or on school property. Even if you are over eighteen years of age, the Homestay family will probably prefer that you do not smoke inside the home. These wishes must be respected.

### **NOT ALLOWED**

Students are not allowed to use illegal drugs. Those students under 18 years of age are not permitted to drink alcohol. As an international student, you are not allowed to take a paying job in Canada. Student ownership of a vehicle while studying in Canada is prohibited and a student is not allowed to drive a vehicle including their homestay parents' vehicle.

### **CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

If you commit an offence under Canadian Law, you will be dealt with by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, as necessary. Homestay parents are not held accountable for offences committed by international students.

### PARENTAL PERMISSION TO TRAVEL FORM

Students, under the age of 18, who wish to travel while they are participants in the Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program, must provide written permission form their biological parents to the Canadian Custodian. Personal travel will not be supervised by Turtle Mountain School Division International Education Program personnel or the Canadian Custodian.

***Therefore, authorization to travel must be provided in writing by the international student's biological parent(s), and is the responsibility of the international student's biological parents.***

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Travel: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Travel: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Transportation:

Air: \_\_\_\_\_

Train: \_\_\_\_\_

Automobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure from Winnipeg: \_\_\_\_\_ include flight #'s and time

Return to Winnipeg: \_\_\_\_\_ include flight #'s and time

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_, permission to travel as stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Parent Comments (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_