



Villa Maria College
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LEARN TO PRIZE WHAT IS OF VALUE

GUIDELINES FOR
**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS**
LIVING WITH A NZ HOST FAMILY





Welcome

We welcome you as an international student to Villa Maria College. It is important that you read through this booklet as it will help you understand about living with a Kiwi family!

Every host family is different. Host parents can come from many different walks of life – married, single, retired, working, with children or no children – there is no typical family, but all share an interest in meeting people from different cultures and are able to provide a welcoming and caring environment for students. Each of our host families have been interviewed, police checked and the home visited by the International department; many have hosted before so we know them well.

Home-stay accommodation is not the same as staying in a Hotel or Airbnb. You will be welcomed as a member of the

family and as such you have responsibilities to make the experience as pleasurable as possible for all. It will take some time and some adjustment on both sides during the first few weeks after you arrive, so please remember there is help available at school at any time if you need to talk or ask questions.

Living in another country can mean a different kind of house, different food, customs, attitudes and ways of doing things. At times you will feel homesick and may find the people and the language strange. These are normal feelings and you must remember you are here to experience a different culture. Living in a host family is an excellent way to totally immerse yourself in our culture while improving your language skills.

Introducing the International Student Team



Mrs Cheryl Etheridge
Director of International Students



Ms Karlien Schreuder
Accommodation Coordinator

Flight Arrivals

You will be met at the airport by your agent, sometimes a member of the international student team and a member(s) of your host family. We understand traveling on your own can be tiring and in some cases emotional so your host family will take you straight to their home so you can settle in and perhaps rest. You should make contact with your

parents very soon after your arrival to reassure them that you have arrived safely.

We look forward to meeting you on your arrival in Christchurch.

Living with your NZ Host

YOUR BEDROOM

It is your responsibility to keep your bedroom clean and tidy. Please respect and care for your host family's home and belongings. Your host family will supply all linen, blankets, and pillow(s) for your bed. Your host family will regularly check your bedroom is kept to a reasonable standard. Most homes in New Zealand do not have central heating. Adequate heating in winter such as an electric heater must be provided by your host. They will inform you on how to operate the heater. You must NOT purchase your own electrical appliances. Your host family may have an electric blanket or a hot water bottle/wheat bag for you to use also. Please bring extra warm clothing with you for the winter months. DO NOT eat or store food or fizzy drinks in your bedroom as this will attract flies, ants and rodents. If you prefer to buy your own snacks, please ask your host where you can store them in their kitchen. Please do not dye your hair in your host family's home as it could damage the bathroom and the carpets.

THE BATHROOM

New Zealand bathrooms might be very different from those in your country. Depending on the system in your host's home, hot water can be limited, so we suggest 8-10 minutes in the shower is long enough. Your host will show you how to operate the bathroom facilities and where to store your personal items. Soap and toilet paper will be provided by your host, but you need to supply all other toiletries.

Always leave the bathroom clean and tidy after use.

LAUNDRY/WASHING CLOTHES

In most homes you will find your hosts are more than happy to do your washing and in other homes you may have to be responsible for washing your own clothes. Your host will show you how to operate the washing machine and where to hang your clothes to dry. Your bedroom must never be used for drying clothes. Bedding should be washed on a regular basis.

FOOD

NZ food is different to what you are used to. Most families eat a variety of food, from many cultures. Try everything, in small amounts, you might be surprised at what you will enjoy. Tell your host if there are any foods you don't like or can't eat. Your hosts will provide breakfast, lunch, dinner and a snack for morning tea and afternoon tea. If for any reason you are going to be late for a meal, you must advise your host family in advance. Permission must be obtained from your host family if you are going to be away for a meal. Some host families may allow you to cook in their kitchen, others would prefer you did not. You will need to respect this rule. You are welcome to buy any extra snacks for yourself.

Breakfast is usually a casual meal with members of the household busy getting ready for work and school. Your host will show you where the food is kept for breakfast and you will just "help yourself" which means you can choose what to have for breakfast which could be cereal, toast/bread, fruit, milk/yoghurt and a hot drink.

Lunch is a light meal in NZ, the main meal of the day is dinner. Again your host may make your lunch for you or you will make it. This is usually sandwiches/wraps/rolls/packet of noodles, a muffin/scone/cake and a piece of fruit.

Hints for eating meals together:

- No slurping – this is considered bad manners in NZ. Eat quietly with your mouth closed.
- Knives, forks and spoons are used for eating – not your fingers.
- Lift food on your fork or spoon to your mouth – do not put your head down to the plate. Do not put the knife in your mouth, this is used for cutting.
- Don't be afraid to try new foods.

In NZ families the whole family usually “help out” with dinner chores – you are part of the family so should offer to help too.

HOME TIMES DURING SCHOOL TERMS

The rules are:

Monday to Thursday and Sunday – you should be home with your host family at 6.00pm and not go out for the rest of the evening. There may be some occasions where this is not applicable e.g. sports training, music lessons, tutoring, gym etc.

Friday and Saturday nights – discuss with your host family where you are going and who you are with and also the agreed time you need to be home. Ensure that:

- you provide phone numbers for your friends' parent(s) so your host can contact them if you are staying overnight at their home
- discuss how you will get there and back home
- you take your cellphone – it must be charged and switched on at all times
- you are home at the agreed time. If for a very good reason you are going to be later than the arranged time – call or text your host family to let them know where you are.

Talk to your host family if you want to invite friends to your home. They will tell you if it is convenient or not.

COMPUTER & INTERNET USE

All homes are required to provide internet access and unlimited wireless. You must use the network in a responsible way and observe restrictions. Students must not use the internet to access inappropriate or offensive websites or downloading copyright/file sharing material such as movies or music.

Please discuss with your family when you should finish calls to your family/friends in the evening as this can be disruptive to the family when they are trying to sleep. Please keep your voice down so you don't disturb other family members sleeping.

INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY 24/7 PHONE

We also provide a 24/7 emergency phone service and can be called by students and hosts outside office hours. If there is an emergency please call Cheryl Etheridge on 02102465315. You will be issued a card with this number at the Orientation.

SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

While you are an International student at Villa Maria you will not be allowed to go on any unsupervised travel overnight. Permission for supervised travel must be given from the school for any overnight trip (even if it is with your host family) unless, it is a school trip. The travel form must be filled out and signed by your natural parents and your host parents 2 weeks before the date of travel.

SICKNESS

If you are sick and unable to attend school, you are expected to stay at home. Your host family needs to call the office to inform us of your absence and also let Cheryl Etheridge or Karlien Schreuder know. If you have to go to the doctor, you can go to any We Care medical centre. You inform them you are a Villa Maria international student. We have a corporate agreement with We Care. Can you please get in touch with Cheryl Etheridge BEFORE you go to the doctor. If you feel unwell while in class, please inform your teacher who will send you to the sick bay – you cannot leave school without permission from the sickbay or one of the international team staff.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

All Villa Maria, host families have a close relationship with our school. Many of them have hosted for us for many years and all have had police checks and we visit them regularly. We work very hard matching students to families and most of the time this works well.

If for any reason you are unhappy about something in your homestay, please come and see Karlien in the international department or if it is easier, email : ksr@villa.school.nz

HINTS TO HELP YOU

- Always say “please” and “thank you”. New Zealanders are very polite and they expect you to be polite as well. We cannot stress this enough – it is considered very important in most homes and is very easy to say
- Don't spend all your time in your bedroom. Make sure you are out with your hosts in the livingroom for at least part of every evening.
- If you ride a bike 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 an instant fine of \$55.00). You should also **always lock your bike** as they can be stolen.
- The international department emails you information on sports, music, club signups, events and other useful information through your school teams page.
- **Show respect for your host family and they will respect you.**



THINGS TO DO IN THE WEEKEND

When you first arrive you will take some time to make friends and get to know your family. You will have a very different schedule from the one you have at home. Many NZ teenagers work after school and in the weekends and most parents work in full-time jobs.

Here are some ideas of things you can do in the weekends. You can get information about them from the International department:

- Hagley Park & Museum
- Riccarton House Saturday market
- Kayaking on Avon River
- Go swimming at the indoor pools
- Join the local gym
- Go to the beach (remember your hat and sunblock)
- Get the bus into the city centre
- Visit the shopping malls
- Go to the movies
- Public events during weekends



Hagley Park with the Museum



Kayaking and punting on the Avon River



Sumner Beach (you can catch a bus here)



Jellie Park Recreation & Sport Centre
(Opposite Burnside High School)

Discussion Points

Here are some questions or things you might discuss with your host family when it is appropriate.

- May I have your wi-fi password please?
- Can I have your cellphone numbers please?
- When is the best time to use the shower on weekdays? Mornings or evenings? Where do you want me to store my bathroom accessories?
- If you are bringing your own adapters/electrical items, please show your host so they can guide you on their use. Our voltage in NZ is very high and some items will not be safe to use.
- What is the procedure about laundry? Where do I put my dirty clothes? Where do I hang my wet washing? If I want to wash my own underwear, how can I do this and where should I hang it? **Never hang washing in your bedroom or over a heater.**
- Do you want me to make my own lunches? Can you show me what to do please? May I help myself to food and drink in moderation at any time or do I need to ask first?
- What jobs/chores would you like me to do in the house?
- Do you have a house key for me to use please? I understand I am responsible for shutting windows and locking the door when I go out.

Villa Maria has agreed to observe and be bound by the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students published by the Ministry of Education. Copies of the Code are available on request from this school or from the New Zealand Ministry of Education website at <http://minedu.govt.nz>

Contact Us

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