Homestay Handbook for Host Families

Queenstown and Christchurch

A practical guide to hosting LSNZ students. The general conditions below apply to both campuses; local arrangements and payments are compared side by side.

Welcome!

LSNZ is happy to welcome you as a part of our big, global family. Hosting is a big responsibility, and we thank you for joining us. Our goal is to provide you with as much information as possible to make your time as a host family a pleasant and successful experience for you and your new international student family member.

Our students come from around the world to study English in Queenstown and Christchurch. For many, it is their first time in New Zealand. Your support can help them settle in, practise English and feel at home.

This handbook covers what you need to know about hosting. Please keep it handy and contact your homestay coordinator or school manager whenever you need help.

Introduction

Guy Hughes opened Queenstown Language School on 19 April 1993. Today, we are known as LSNZ, with a second campus opened in Christchurch in 2024. LSNZ is an NZQA Category 1 school.

We work with host families who provide a safe, welcoming home for our students. All placements follow the conditions in this handbook and any additional arrangements confirmed by LSNZ in writing.

All bookings are made following the conditions in this guide and any additional arrangements specified in writing by LSNZ. These conditions can only be waived when LSNZ confirms in writing. Failure to comply with the Homestay conditions will result in LSNZ removing a student from homestay without notice, and payment will cease immediately upon their departure. Under these circumstances, LSNZ is under no obligation to find a replacement student or to pay a notice period.

My Role As A Host Family

At LSNZ, our primary concern is that the student's homestay at LSNZ is a happy experience, both for you and for the student. Hosting a student should be an extremely rewarding experience for everyone in the family. We pride ourselves on our high standards, and effectively you are representing our organization and so we therefore ask that you provide as part of our Pastoral Care of International Students: https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Code-of-Practice/Tertiary-and-International-Learners-Code-2021/NZQA_Pastoral-Care-Code-of-Practice_English.pdf

A safe and welcoming environment.

Support and make the student feel like part of the family.

Ensure that the student understands essential information such as typical household routines, meals, curfew times (Junior Students under 18), the nearest bus stop and bus schedules, and the fire escape plan for the home. Do not hesitate to ask the student to repeat the information and encourage the student to ask for clarification.

Ensure that you swap telephone numbers (mobile and/or landline) with your student.

Provide appropriate bedroom furniture, study desk and chair with adequate lighting.

Adequate heating.

Voice any concerns and questions regarding the student to the homestay coordinator or the school manager.

- Speak clearly and slowly and be patient, giving plenty of opportunities for conversation.

First day of school

Host families are normally asked to bring students to school on their first day, show them the relevant bus stops and explain how to obtain the local bus card.

Item	Queenstown	Christchurch
Bus card	Bee Card beecard.co.nz/Pages/GetACard	Metro Card metroinfo.co.nz/metrocard-and-fares/where-to-buy/
Public transport	orc.govt.nz/public-transport/queenstown-buses-and-ferries	metroinfo.co.nz/timetables/

Homestay Facilities And Services

Registration

The details of homestay families will be kept on the school database. This information is not shared with anyone, other than the student, their family or agent. All rooms in the homestay, be it an initial registration visit and/or at review, must have been seen by the LSNZ homestay coordinator or school manager.

Extra requirements to host Junior Students

No junior student will be placed with any host family that participates in renting a room to Airbnb or other short-term guests. The school has to comply with the Pastoral Care of International students, due to the short- term nature of Airbnb-type accommodation, it would be impractical for the school to obtain a police check. All other guests over the age of 18 require a police check, this also includes any flatmates. It is the host family's responsibility to inform LSNZ of any changes with regards to any person over the age of 18 residing at the given address whilst you are hosting a junior or regular student.

Facilities to be provided

The student must be allowed to utilize all communal areas of the house in the same way as any family member unless clearly specified. Please ensure that your home is clean and tidy while hosting a student, especially when they first arrive. Most international students, who choose homestay for their accommodation, tend to do so because they want to become part of a New Zealand family and to have some local support and the opportunity to use, practice and improve their English.

Student's room

The room must be in a good state of cleanliness and repair and have adequate heating. The room should be sufficiently spacious, equipped with a standard-sized bed and mattress (camp beds, bunk beds, futons and sofa beds are not acceptable) and adequate hanging and drawer space for clothes. The room must not contain any of the host family's personal possessions or items of storage as it must be for the sole use of the student. Students are expected to keep their rooms tidy.

Bed linen and towels must be provided and changed at least once every week and there must be a suitable supply of duvets or blankets available. In specified cases, twin rooms may also be requested. In addition, no student should be asked to share a room at any point of their stay otherwise agreed by LSNZ. All International students will not reside in the same home with anyone of the same nationality unless this is agreed in advance by LSNZ.

Meals

The fees paid to the homestay family include meals as detailed in the Homestay Accommodation Rates of Payment. Meals will be provided as agreed and will offer a varied and well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements expressed by the student. However, homestay families are not expected to provide special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, halal or gluten-free meals) unless agreed and confirmed at the time of the booking. All students are expected to eat the same meals as other members of the family and at the same times unless timing issues occasionally prevent this. If the student is due to arrive later than the scheduled meal time, then the food should be saved so that the student can eat this at a later time.

Students with Half-Board Meal Option: Students have a half-board meal plan, they will be provided with two meals per day; breakfast and dinner and Three meals per day on the weekend; breakfast, lunch and dinner. The meal plan is designed to cater to dietary preferences and nutritional needs, ensuring students have a balanced and enjoyable experience.

Heating

Under the Code of Practice for International students a bedroom heater must be provided. We urge hosts to provide a heater with a wattage output which will allow acceptable warmth for the size of the bedroom. However, it is the student's responsibility to turn the heater off when they are not in the room, overnight and when they leave for classes in the morning. As a guideline, an acceptable usage time would be for a maximum of 5 hours per day. The temperature in the house should be maintained at a warm, comfortable level. It should be kept in mind that many students come from warmer climates and may feel cold in temperatures acceptable to people who live here.

Home Appliances

Monitoring your student in the early days is key when using the appliances safely in your home. Appliances in New Zealand can be very different to other countries. Explain how the appliances in your home are to be used, i.e. electric jug, microwave, washing machine, tumble drier (if you use one) and heaters. Explain any safety measures they need to take and show them how they shouldn't place hot items onto the work benchtops and why. Once you feel comfortable and your student is using appliances safely it can be relaxed a little, but it is always a good idea to keep monitoring this area.

Telephone Calls

LSNZ cannot accept liability for students' telephone charges. If the student uses the host family landline, arrange reverse charge calls.

Internet

All international students need to use the internet in homestay as it's the main way of communicating with their family and friends back home in their country. Please ensure that your internet is available for students to use when they need it. If you have a monthly data allowance limit, please communicate this to the student at the start of their stay in your home. If you charge any additional charges for the Internet

then this should be discussed with LSNZ before we book students to you. Internet is a reasonable expectation these days.

Keys

All students must be provided with their own keys to allow them free access to the homestay at any time.

LSNZ cannot accept liability for any charges incurred by the homestay family, for replacing keys or changing door locks, if the student should lose or fail to return keys on their departure. It is the responsibility of the homestay family to make arrangements with the student for the safe return of the house key before their departure.

Responsibilities (Homestay Family)

Conditions for the Provision of Homestay Accommodation

Privacy

The student is entitled to exclusive use of their bedroom at the homestay accommodation and access for the host family is not normally permitted unless agreed by the student or for the purpose of cleaning the room or changing bed linen.

Family Life/Guests

The student is asked to do all that they can do to fit into the lifestyle and routines of the household. Similarly, the homestay family is asked to ensure that the student is welcomed as a member of the home and that the differences in his/her background are carefully considered. Particular attention should be paid to the requirements of his/her religious faith, social customs, and attitudes.

The homestay family must help and encourage the student to converse in English as much as possible to improve his/her understanding of the language and assist him/her in adapting to the Kiwi lifestyle. Make sure that you are there for them, regularly inviting your student to join you in preparing tea, daily mealtime conversation, doing the dishes together, watching and discussing the news. These are all great opportunities for them to practice their English and for you to make them feel included in your eve ryday life.

It is at the discretion of the homestay family if a student may bring guests to visit or stay overnight at the family's home. Students should be made aware that in all circumstances guests are only allowed with the express permission of the homestay family.

Insurance

The homestay family should accept that there will be a certain amount of wear and tear and accidental damage to their home when hosting students. The homestay family should ensure that their household insurance provides adequate cover. Homestay families are advised that LSNZ cannot accept liability for any claim in respect of damage caused by students, whether by accident, negligence or design. If damage to the home does occur, then the homestay family is asked to negotiate directly with the student and to agree on a reasonable amount to replace or repair the item in question. We will help if need be.

House Rules and Local Information

We suggest that you create and offer/implement a set of house rules. The homestay family is asked to explain any essential rules to the student once they are settled into their new surroundings. Helpful information – such as bus numbers, timing and approximate fares, should also be made available.

Supervision and Curfew Times

Supervision is required for students 17 or under years of age as they are legally children. Students of this age should return to the homestay no later than 22:00 hours or as suits your family, for safety reasons the following recommendation of time to be at home is advised:

15 years - 7:00 pm

- 16 and 17 years - 7:00 pm Sunday to Thursday; 10:00 pm Friday and Saturday

Students aged 18 and over should be advised what time you want them home. It is advisable that you make a note of the mobile number of your student so that you can make direct contact with them if they are out later than expected. If there is any concern regarding a student's behaviour the homestay family should inform LSNZ.

Alterations to the Home/Moving out

If a student has been placed with you and during their stay and you are planning to move home, structural alterations or redecorating your home, then LSNZ must be advised in advance. We will then consult with the student and ascertain whether they wish to remain in the homestay during this time. If you are moving home, LSNZ must be notified of your new address and your new home must be approved by LSNZ for use.

Hosting students from other organizations

Host families must inform LSNZ staff of the nationality of any other students you are hosting at the time of accepting a student from LSNZ.

You must make every effort to honour your commitment made to host a student for an agreed period of time and, if unforeseen circumstances prevent you from fulfilling a hosting commitment, you must provide as much advance notice as possible.

Support from our staff

The homestay coordinator and administration team are available Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm by telephone or email. Where possible, avoid student breaks (11:00-11:15 am) and lunch (12:45-1:30 pm). Emergency numbers are for urgent after-hours matters only.

Item	Queenstown	Christchurch
Campus address	Level 2, Dart House, Remarkables Park Centre, 11 Hawthorne Drive, Frankton, Queenstown 9300	99 Cashel Street, Christchurch Central, Christchurch 8011
Postal address	PO Box 911, Queenstown 9300	-
Telephone	+64 3 442 6625	+64 21 289 6625
After-hours emergency	+64 21 768 252	+64 21 287 6625
Email	manager@lsnz.co.nz	manager@lsnz.co.nz

Communication/Police checks

All Homestay families are required to complete the Homestay Information and police check for any person over 18 residing at their addresses. This in turn assists our homestay coordinator in placing the most suitable student(s) in your home. Please would you inform the staff as soon as reasonably possible of any changes to the information you have provided to us, so that our database can be kept as accurate as possible. If new 18+ year old moves into your house, we are also legally required to have them police checked.

Booking Procedures And Payments

Booking

An accommodation week consists of 7 nights with students typically arriving and departing over the weekend.

Any verbal communications should be confirmed by email or text reminders for future student bookings, along with arrival time and departure information. Once a booking has been accepted by the homestay family, the agreement is considered to be firm and binding.

Airport transfers for the student

Students can now make the choice of being picked up by a private transfer or using public transport; you will be informed of this when you receive notification of the student's arrival.

Homestay families are also offered to be paid to pick up the student if requested.

The arrival of new student

Once the placement has been confirmed with the student/ agent, we will email you the student information. You will be contacted beforehand with the student's arrival time. If you cannot be home to greet the student, it is vital that you talk to the manager about organizing other arrangements.

Please remember, that some of these students have travelled a very long way with only a small amount of English. If you cannot be home or are working at the time they arrive, please arrange for a neighbour or friend to be there to settle them in, make them feel welcome and spend a bit of time with them until you are free. This is really important. No one wants any confusion on arrival and students may be tired or confused. The first impression when a student is dropped off at your home is very important.

Disruptions to travel

At times the student may experience issues with their travel where a flight has been delayed, customs have had concerns or baggage has been lost. LSNZ relies on the student to contact us with the new arrival information so sometimes there can be short notice on changes to pick up/ drop off times. We do our best to get the information to you as soon as possible.

Cancellation of a booking by a homestay family

When accepting a booking, please be aware that while it is understood that occasionally hosts have to cancel due to family emergencies, we do not expect our homestay families to cancel unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Please only cancel in cases of a really unavoidable situation.

Cancellation/alteration of a booking by LSNZ

From time to time cancellations and alterations are made to bookings; these are generally unavoidable due to Visa Delays/Declines or Students life events causing a cancellation or deferral. We will try to advise you as soon as we are aware of a change to the booking and arrange another student in their place so no funds are lost.

In some cases these changes are reimbursed, these are situation dependent.

Non-Arrival

If a student doesn't arrive, the manager/ homestay coordinator will contact the host family immediately and let you know what has happened. If there has been a delay, we will advise you as soon as possible.

Change of Accommodation

Some students may choose to move out to either a different area, to a flat or to the student accommodation during their stay with you. If they do, we require two weeks' notice so we can let you know in advance when your student will leave your home.

Regardless of when the student leaves within those two weeks, you will still be paid from when they give notice until when they leave (2 weeks). Please note that although we may make the arrangements for the students, there can be occasions when they may cancel, postpone or otherwise not be able to be placed with you. We will endeavour to place a new student in their place as soon as we can.

Holidays host/student

Important: Please inform the manager/ homestay coordinator of any pending holidays before you accept any students.

If you are planning to be away when you have a student staying with you, you can offer to take the student with you. Or if you feel comfortable and the student feels comfortable, you can leave them in the house with some prepared meals. Again, if you are unsure, please discuss the situation with the school as we may be able to offer an alternative solution.

It is not okay to leave your student alone in the house for multiple days without telling us. If you know you will be away please let us know before we place the student with you.

Code of Practice requirements: Under no circumstances should an under-18-year-old international student be left unattended in your home overnight.

Students must also give two weeks' notice to the school and host families of any holiday that they will be taking. A $180 per week retainer is paid to host families when a student is away on holiday and requests the room to be held.

Only students over the age of 18 may request a holiday. Students under 18 may not request a holiday at any time.

Christmas Holidays

During the Christmas/New Year Holiday period the school will be closed for 2 weeks.

Payment to the Homestay Family

Accommodation fees are paid by bank transfer. The first payment is made on the Tuesday after the student arrives, followed by fortnightly payments until graduation or the end of the agreed homestay period.

Payment rates in the supplied 2025/2026 handbooks:

Item	Queenstown	Christchurch
Adult per week	$400	$350 (half-board)
Junior per week	$450 (ages 16-17)	$400 (ages 14-17, half-board)
Extra night	$50	$50
Special dietary requirements	$50 per week	$50 per week
Christmas surcharge	$50 per week	$50 per week
Airport transfer	$50 each way	$50 each way

A special diet includes an allergy, intolerance, medical need, vegetarian or vegan diet that cannot be selected from the usual meals. LSNZ will discuss requirements with the student and advise the host.

Private Arrangement

If a student wishes to pay accommodation fee directly to the homestay family it becomes a private arrangement and LSNZ should be notified immediately. LSNZ cannot accept any liability for this arrangement.

Overpayment

If, at any time the homestay family receives payment in excess of its entitlement, it is a strict condition of these arrangements that they must tell LSNZ without delay, so that arrangements to repay the excess amount are confirmed.

Acceptance of Conditions

In accepting a booking for the accommodation of a student, the family agrees to these conditions and gives consent to the disclosure of any relevant information about their home and family to the agent/representative making the reservation. The homestay family also agrees to abide by the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021, which can be found on the NZQA website. https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Code-of-Practice/Tertiary-and-International- Learners-Code-2021/NZQA_Pastoral-Care-Code-of-Practice_English.pdf

Data Protection Act 1993

Under the above Act 1993, any member of a Homestay Family is entitled to request from LSNZ a copy of personal data held on its database relating to him/her. The request can only relate to an individual member of the family and must be submitted in writing by that individual to the Manager/Homestay Coordinator.

Overcoming Cultural Differences

It is not uncommon for students and homestay families to have misconceptions of each other's cultures. What you may consider rude or unacceptable may be normal behaviour in the student's culture and vice versa. It is important to communicate clearly with your students.

<u>What challenges might the student experience during their stay?</u>

- Homesickness and loneliness
- Difficulty with language
- Homestay/student differences
- Different rules and expectations from their own home
- Food expectations

<u>What can you do to help?</u>

- Talk to the student
- Encourage the student to talk
- Help the student to find interests to become involved
- Encourage the student to talk with the support staff at school and notify them if you think that or your student needs help

Culture shock is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply travel to another type of life. This can best be described as realizing that your familiar ways of behaving are no longer appropriate. The students find themselves in a foreign culture, where people have different

expectations, where the language is different and where the rules for polite and socially acceptable behaviour may be different to what they have been used to in their society. The severity of culture shock and the duration that the student feels it can be influenced by such factors as individual personality, the relationship between the host family and student, stress such as a forthcoming exam and changes in sleeping and eating habits.

Symptoms of culture shock

- Changes in eating habits and sleeping habits
- Acute homesickness; calling home more often than usual
- Being hostile/complaining all the time about the host country/culture
- Irritability, sadness, depression
- Frequent frustration; being easily angered
- Self-doubts; sense of failure
- Recurrent illness
- Withdrawing from friends or other people and/or activities

Helping to overcome culture shock: Explain to your student what culture shock is and that these feelings are normal and temporary. Be as sympathetic and understanding as possible, this is not a reflection of you as a host family. Encourage the student to talk about these feelings with other students or the support team at the school.

Hosting an international student can be a rewarding experience, but you do not have to manage every situation on your own. If you are concerned about your student or unsure how to help, please contact our homestay team.

Thank you for opening your home and helping our students feel welcome in New Zealand.