LSNZ

HOMESTAY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

For LSNZ staff and approved host families

Document owner	LSNZ Management / Accommodation Team
Applies to	Queenstown and Christchurch campuses
Version	2.0
Effective date	September 2026
Review cycle	At least annually, and after material regulatory or operational change

Purpose

LSNZ aims to provide international learners with safe, suitable and supportive accommodation that complements their study and wellbeing. These policies set expectations for LSNZ staff, host families and learners, and support LSNZ compliance with New Zealand law and the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

1. Scope and principles

These policies apply to homestay accommodation arranged or approved by LSNZ. They should be read together with the LSNZ Homestay Handbook, Student Accommodation Handbook, complaints procedure, critical incident procedure, privacy policy and other relevant LSNZ policies.

- A safe, clean, warm and comfortable living environment.
- Respectful treatment, cultural awareness and protection from exploitation, harassment, abuse and discrimination.
- Clear communication between the learner, host family and LSNZ.
- Reasonable consideration of dietary, cultural, religious, accessibility and other disclosed needs.
- Accessible support and emergency contact arrangements.
- Additional safeguards for international learners under 18 years of age.

2. Regulatory framework

LSNZ is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code). The Code is administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). LSNZ must ensure that accommodation it arranges is safe, in acceptable condition and meets relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.

Key legislation and guidance relevant to this policy include:

- Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.
- Education and Training Act 2020.
- Privacy Act 2020 and the Information Privacy Principles, including IPP 3A in force from 1 May 2026.
- Relevant health, safety, tenancy, building, fire safety, child protection and other New Zealand legal requirements where applicable.
- NZQA guidance for tertiary providers on accommodation and safety checks.

3. Privacy and information management

LSNZ collects personal information needed to assess hosts, arrange placements, support learners, manage safety and wellbeing, process payments and meet legal or regulatory obligations. This may include names, contact details, household information, identification, police-vetting information, medical or dietary information supplied for placement purposes, emergency contacts and records of inspections or incidents.

- Collect only information that is reasonably necessary for a lawful LSNZ purpose.
- Tell people why information is being collected, how it may be used and who may receive it, including where information is collected indirectly and IPP 3A applies.
- Keep personal information secure and restrict access to staff who need it for their role.
- Use and disclose information only for appropriate purposes or where otherwise permitted or required by law.
- Allow individuals to request access to and correction of their personal information, subject to the Privacy Act 2020.
- Retain records only for as long as required by LSNZ policy, law, audit, contractual or regulatory obligations.

4. Code of conduct - LSNZ accommodation staff

Staff involved in homestay arrangements must act professionally, impartially and in the best interests of learner safety and wellbeing. Staff will:

- Provide hosts and learners with clear information about expectations, responsibilities and available support.
- Consider individual learner needs and cultural differences without discrimination.

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries, confidentiality and accurate records.
- Respond promptly to accommodation concerns and escalate urgent welfare or safety matters immediately.
- Arrange a change of accommodation where LSNZ considers the placement unsuitable or unsafe.
- Use LSNZ complaint, incident and risk-management processes consistently.
- Maintain appropriate communication with parents or legal guardians for learners under 18.

5. Code of conduct - host families

Approved hosts are expected to provide a welcoming, respectful and safe home environment. Hosts must:

- Treat the learner as a member of the household while respecting their privacy, independence and cultural identity.
- Provide a private, clean, warm and adequately furnished bedroom with a bed, linen, desk or suitable study space, storage, lighting and appropriate heating.
- Provide reliable internet access, access to bathroom and laundry facilities, and reasonable use of household common areas.
- Provide meals in accordance with the placement arrangement: normally breakfast and dinner Monday-Friday, and breakfast, lunch and dinner on weekends. If the host is unavailable for a scheduled meal, suitable food must be made available.
- Provide a household orientation covering house rules, meal times, laundry, internet, heating, transport, smoking/vaping, visitors, security, emergencies and any reasonable household expectations.
- Support the learner to adjust to New Zealand life and practise English, while recognising that learners may need time and privacy.
- Respect dietary, cultural and religious requirements that were accepted as part of the placement.
- Inform LSNZ promptly of significant changes in household composition, address, contact details, pets, room arrangements, health/safety risks or other circumstances that may affect the placement.
- Inform LSNZ promptly about serious concerns regarding a learner's safety, wellbeing or behaviour.
- Follow the LSNZ Homestay Handbook and any written residential caregiver agreement.

6. Host recruitment, approval and records

A learner will not be placed with a host until LSNZ has completed an appropriate approval process. This normally includes:

- Host application and household information.
- Interview with the host and, where practicable, relevant household members.
- Initial home inspection to assess the bedroom, common areas, cleanliness, heating, safety, transport/location and overall suitability.
- Agreement to LSNZ policies, host responsibilities and payment arrangements.
- Required identity, police-vetting and other safety checks, particularly for placements involving learners under 18.
- Recording approved host details, inspection dates, safety-check dates and placement history in the LSNZ system.

LSNZ may decline, suspend or discontinue use of a host where suitability concerns arise, including unsafe conditions, inaccurate information, serious complaints, unwillingness to follow LSNZ requirements, inappropriate household arrangements or an excessive focus on financial gain over learner welfare.

7. Additional requirements for learners under 18

LSNZ applies additional safeguards where an international tertiary learner under 18 is placed with a residential caregiver. In accordance with the Code, LSNZ will:

- Ensure the accommodation is safe, in acceptable condition and meets applicable regulatory and legislative requirements.
- Ensure the residential caregiver safety check is completed and remains current. LSNZ will refresh required caregiver safety checks at least every three years, or earlier if required by law, NZQA guidance or risk circumstances.
- Ensure an appropriate and current safety check is completed for each person aged 18 or over who resides at the residential caregiver's accommodation.
- Maintain a written agreement with the residential caregiver setting out the roles and responsibilities of LSNZ and the caregiver.
- Maintain effective communication with the learner and their parent or legal guardian when accommodation issues arise.
- Conduct sufficient learner interviews and home visits to monitor and review the quality of residential care, taking into account the learner's age, length of stay and other relevant risk factors.
- Have appropriate arrangements for transfer of care and obtain parent/legal guardian agreement where required for decisions affecting the learner.
- Ensure appropriate supervision and household arrangements for the learner.

Short-term guests and accommodation-sharing arrangements can create additional safety-check obligations. Hosts must tell LSNZ in advance if they use any part of the home for short-term accommodation (for example Airbnb or similar platforms) or if new adult residents/flatmates move into the home. LSNZ may determine that a household is unsuitable for an under-18 placement.

8. Home inspections, monitoring and ongoing approval

Homestay monitoring is an ongoing process. LSNZ may conduct scheduled or unscheduled contact and visits when reasonably necessary for quality, safety or compliance purposes.

- An initial inspection is required before first approval.
- Active homestays are subject to periodic re-inspection at planned intervals and whenever LSNZ considers a further check necessary.
- A new inspection may be required after a material household change, relocation, significant complaint, safety concern, or a long period without hosting.
- For learners under 18, the frequency of learner interviews and home visits will be sufficient to meet the Code and will take account of age, length of stay and other relevant factors rather than relying on a single fixed frequency.
- Hosts must cooperate with reasonable requests for updated information, inspection and safety-check documentation.
- LSNZ records inspection outcomes, required actions and follow-up.

9. Student placement

LSNZ matches learners and hosts using the information reasonably available at the time of placement. LSNZ will consider factors such as age, gender preferences, dietary needs, allergies, pets, transport, location, smoking/vaping, household composition, cultural considerations and duration of stay.

LSNZ cannot guarantee every preference. A successful placement requires reasonable flexibility from both the learner and the host. Unless specifically agreed otherwise, a learner will have a private bedroom and will not share a bedroom with a host family member.

10. Homestay fees and host payments

The weekly homestay fee is intended to cover the agreed room, utilities, internet, laundry access and meals described in the placement terms. LSNZ administers host payments by electronic bank transfer according to the current payment schedule communicated to hosts.

- Hosts must promptly advise LSNZ of changes that affect payment, including learner arrival/departure changes or temporary absences where relevant to the agreed terms.
- If an overpayment occurs, LSNZ may require the host to repay the overpaid amount.
- Payment rates, notice periods and any holiday/absence arrangements are governed by the current Homestay Handbook or written placement terms, which may be updated separately from this policy.

11. Risk management

LSNZ identifies and manages accommodation risks using prevention, monitoring, reporting and escalation. Risks may include injury, unsafe accommodation, abuse, harassment, exploitation, theft, substance misuse, serious conflict, mental health or wellbeing concerns, financial hardship, cultural adjustment, inappropriate supervision, unsafe visitors or household changes.

Depending on the circumstances, LSNZ actions may include:

- Contacting the learner and host and documenting the concern.
- Conducting a home visit or re-inspection.
- Putting interim safeguards or support in place.
- Moving the learner to alternative accommodation.
- Contacting a parent/legal guardian, emergency contact, medical provider, Police, Oranga Tamariki or another relevant authority when appropriate.
- Suspending or removing a host from the LSNZ homestay programme.
- Completing an incident or critical incident report and following LSNZ escalation procedures.

12. Critical incidents and emergencies

A critical incident is a serious event that may significantly affect the safety or wellbeing of a learner, host or other person. Examples can include death, serious illness or injury, attempted suicide or serious self-harm concern, sexual or physical assault, serious mental health crisis, drug/alcohol overdose, fire, natural disaster, infectious disease event, missing learner, or credible threats of violence.

The priority in a critical incident is immediate safety. In an emergency, call 111 first. Hosts and learners must then contact the designated LSNZ emergency contact as soon as practicable. LSNZ will coordinate its response, document actions, notify relevant people or authorities where required, protect privacy as far as possible, and arrange alternative accommodation or support when necessary.

13. Complaints and grievances

Learners and hosts are encouraged to raise concerns early. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing and will be handled under the LSNZ complaints procedure. Urgent safety or wellbeing matters will be addressed immediately; other accommodation complaints should be acknowledged and progressed promptly.

- Step 1 - Raise the concern with the Accommodation Coordinator or another appropriate LSNZ staff member.
- Step 2 - LSNZ records the issue, gathers relevant information and gives affected parties a fair opportunity to respond.
- Step 3 - LSNZ decides and communicates appropriate action, which may include mediation, corrective action, a warning, re-inspection or a change of accommodation.
- Step 4 - If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the matter may be escalated under LSNZ's formal complaints procedure.

14. Quality assurance, feedback and continuous improvement

LSNZ monitors the quality of its homestay service through host and learner contact, surveys, complaints and incident trends, home visits, inspection records and staff review. Feedback may lead to changes in guidance, host approval, training, placement practices or policy.

A single item of negative feedback does not automatically disqualify a host. LSNZ will consider the seriousness, evidence, pattern of concerns, response of the host and overall suitability before deciding future use.

15. Host obligation to report changes

Hosts must notify LSNZ promptly of any change that may affect a learner or the suitability of the placement, including:

- new household members, flatmates or regular adult occupants;
- changes to relationship/family composition relevant to the placement;
- moving house or significant renovations;
- change to the learner's bedroom or facilities;
- new pets where this may affect safety, allergies or placement suitability;
- short-term rental/Airbnb activity or regular overnight guests;
- serious illness, safety issue or other circumstance that may reduce the host's ability to provide care;
- changes to availability, including periods when the host cannot accept learners.

16. Records and evidence

LSNZ maintains records appropriate to demonstrate the operation and monitoring of its homestay programme. Records may include host applications, agreements, household details, safety checks, police-vetting status, inspections, learner placement records, contact notes, complaints, incidents, parent/guardian permissions and payment records.

17. Responsibility summary

Party	Primary responsibilities	Key reporting duty
LSNZ	Approve and monitor hosts; match placements; support learners; maintain records; manage complaints, risks and emergencies.	Act on safety/wellbeing concerns and regulatory obligations.
Host family	Provide safe, suitable accommodation and agreed support/meals; follow LSNZ requirements.	Tell LSNZ promptly about household changes, incidents and concerns.
Learner	Respect reasonable household rules; communicate concerns; provide accurate needs/preferences.	Tell LSNZ promptly if the placement feels unsafe or unsuitable.
Parent/legal guardian (under 18)	Provide required consents and maintain communication with LSNZ.	Inform LSNZ of relevant needs, concerns and changes.

18. Regulatory references

NZQA - The Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/the-code/

NZQA - Accommodation checks under the Code: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/the-code/the-code-for-education-providers/accommodation-checks/

NZQA - Learner complaints: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/the-code/the-code-for-learners/learner-complaints/

Office of the Privacy Commissioner - Privacy Act 2020 principles: https://www.privacy.org.nz/privacy-principles/

Study Complaints | Ngā Amuamu Tauira: https://www.studycomplaints.org.nz/

This document is an LSNZ operational policy. Where legislation, the Code, NZQA directions or other binding requirements change, those requirements take precedence and this policy must be reviewed accordingly.