



BECOMING A HOST FAMILY

Who can be a Host Family?

Hosts may be married couples, single individuals, single parents with children and couples or partners with or without children. More importantly, our host families have an interest in sharing their own culture with others and are eager to learn about other languages and cultures. To be a host parent one requires a responsible and mature personality and genuine interest in the well-being of their hosted student.

Expectations

Adjusting to new surroundings can be particularly difficult for some students, so primarily we ask that you are willing and able to provide both emotional and physical support to your student.

Emotionally students need:

- A warm, caring, friendly and interested household
- Family members who are eager to learn about another culture and to share their own
- A family with a sense of humour, patience and an open mind.

Physically they need:

- A clean, healthy and friendly home environment
- A bedroom of their own
- Three meals a day, seven days per week (breakfast, a packed lunch, an evening meal) and the occasional snack.
- Help with their homework if necessary
- Airport pick up and drop off
- Lots of opportunities to speak English and be involved in the household routine
- Internet and computer access.

How does the Host Family benefit?

- An opportunity to make friendships around the world
- Improving their cross-cultural understanding
- An opportunity to share Australian culture
- The satisfaction of seeing a student's language skills improve
- Reimbursement for hosting
- Support from trained and experienced coordinating staff
- An opportunity to meet new people and form friendships within the host family circle.

About Our Students

The majority of our students are aged between 18 and 23, study from between 2 and 5 weeks and are most likely to come from North East Asian countries, for example, China, Korea or Japan. Our students are usually visitors from overseas Universities who have come to Australia to improve their English and experience a different culture as part of a 'Study Tour'. They tend to be here during their University's summer and winter breaks, with peak months being January, February, July and August. Not all of our homestay students fall into these categories and our students may come from other regions including the Middle East or South America.

Some may be mature age professionals. Some students may be studying as an individual rather than with a larger group, and we have an increasing number of Muslim students coming to study with us.

University Study Tour students will either be integrated with our student body as part of our General English for Academic Purpose Program (GEAP), having either morning (9.00am – 1.00pm) or afternoon (1.00pm – 5.00pm) classes, or will have a separate program tailored to their specific needs with their own timetable.

Due to the mix of language and cultural focus of the program undertaken by Study Tour students and the relatively short period of time they spend in Australia, their main need is to fully immerse in the Australian way of life in order to improve their English language skills. Homestay living arrangements therefore become an integral part of the student's development. As young adults, our visiting students are independent enough to cope with everyday living, but rely on the support of a homestay family to help them adapt to their new surroundings and truly experience what Adelaide has to offer during their limited time in Australia.

For Individual students, homestay is arranged for an initial 5 weeks only. Some of these students may be studying for 3 years or more and so if a student wishes to stay longer than 5 weeks, and the family is happy for the student to continue living with them, the family and student make their own arrangement from that point forward.

Our individual students may be studying as part of GEAP or may be enrolled into our Pre-enrolment English Program (PEP) which leads onto an award program at the University, if successfully completed. Individual student's needs may be different to those on a Study Tour, and may be more independent and more focussed on their study than students studying for a shorter period.

Since their main focus is on study, internet access and a comfortable, private place to study is a necessity.

Our Expectations

The following is a guide to the expectation within homestay households for visiting students:

- Meeting the student on arrival, and fare welling them on departure, within the airport lounge (at airport arrival please bring a sign with the students name clearly printed).
- Private use of a clean and comfortable bedroom, and access to the living areas of the home, laundry and bathroom facilities.
- Food provision for three meals a day, with the evening meal to be partaken with the family. Breakfast and lunch foods are to be available for students to help themselves.
- Accompanying the student to and from the University on the first day of their course commencement and payment of the first transport cost to the University (in the form of a bus or train ticket, or car journey).
- All Host Families are asked to complete a "Statement by Supplier" form. This allows for a tax-free payment to be made to families as reimbursement for the supply of accommodation, food and associated expenses incurred during the stay of an overseas student.
- At least one family member is required to attend the Homestay information evening held at PCE in advance of the students' arrival.
- The host family is responsible for instructing the student on the correct use of all household appliances. No repair or replacement cost will be met by the University for any damage incurred during the hosting period.
- In the event that a student is required to relocate to alternative accommodation, the remainder of the monies provided to the family as reimbursement for the supply of accommodation and associated expenses shall be returned to PCE within 10 working days of notification.

Supporting a Language Student

Together you and your family have much to offer in support of a language student if everyone in the household is:

- Empathetic, open minded and culturally aware
- Willing to communicate in English at all times
- Caring and supportive
- Willing to share your lives with your student; and
- Able to introduce appropriate boundaries depending on age and maturity of the student.

How to overcome the language barrier:

Despite the fact that most international homestay students have studied English language for at least a year in their own country, some students face difficulties comprehending what they hear because:

- Colloquial everyday English sounds different to the formal textbook English they have learned.
- Use of Idioms such as "raining cats and dogs" are often confusing and difficult to understand.
- During exchanges, our speed of delivery, accents, intonation and rhythm make it difficult for non-native speakers to distinguish individual words.
- It is important to remember to speak slowly and distinctly. For your students to gain confidence in their ability to communicate and converse, they need to feel they can understand and be understood. Try to bear in mind that it takes time for the ear to adjust to new speech sounds so patience is needed to allow your student time to listen, comprehend and comment during a language exchange. Making your student feel that they are making a worthwhile contribution to a conversation will often avoid making them feel embarrassed.
- Be aware that the necessary constant concentration required is very tiring for a non-native speaker so students may need to occasionally retreat to their rooms. As with all family members, it is important to maintain a balance between interaction and privacy, by respecting each other's space and need for alone time. Tiredness generally leads to a tendency to make language mistakes, but mistakes are an important part of language learning so encourage and correct your student in a way that you are both comfortable with.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can we really afford to be a homestay family?

PCE recognises the fact that families become involved in the homestay program because they see it as an opportunity for the family to experience a cultural exchange. However we don't expect the experience to be a financial burden and currently provide financial reimbursement of \$260 per week to cover the costs for food, entertainment, program outings, travel expenses and other miscellaneous expenses that may be incurred over the student's stay.

Please note: as payment is made by EFT, it is essential that we are advised of all change of personal, address and banking details immediately, to ensure efficient payment.

How much will we know about our student before arrival?

We will give you some basic information about your student approximately 3 weeks before their arrival date, together with a letter they have written to you. At this stage, we ask you communicate via email or social networking with your student and include photos of your family to begin acquainting yourselves before meeting each other at the airport.

What do we need to provide?

It is important to provide the student with a bedroom for their sole use. They must also be the only foreign student of their nationality staying within your home. This is an essential component of the home stay program as it is important that the student is encouraged to communicate in English only.

It is a requirement that each family provide a computer for the student to use that has access to the internet (preferably Wi-Fi). Students may require the use of the internet for study projects or to keep in touch with family and friends. As data limits and costs associated with the internet may be different from country to country, we strongly advise that you discuss internet usage with your students.

Will we have a chance to meet with other homestay families?

Yes, we hold homestay information evenings periodically. It is important that at least one member of your family attend. During this meeting details of the program are provided, any last minute questions can be dealt with and hints on hosting will also be shared. It is also a great opportunity to talk to experienced host families and benefit from their knowledge. You may find other families involved who live in the same or nearby suburb and this can be very helpful for sharing transport and weekend activities for your student.

How much will we actually see of our student?

Students participate in English language classes and/or excursions each weekday from Monday to Friday. Some programs include an overnight stay, weekend or three (sometimes four) day trips away to destinations such as Kangaroo Island, the Riverland or the Flinders Ranges. We will provide you with an activities program so that you are able to plan other activities that do not conflict with the student's schedule. Of course host families are also invited and encouraged to attend social evenings and activities with their student throughout the program. In general terms, most evenings and weekends will be available for you to spend time with your host student.

What sort of things should we do in the time we have available?

Involving them in your usual family activities is probably the best suggestion. During the week, encouraging your student to use English to talk about their day, the things that are different between our two countries, their family at home and other such everyday things is of great value. On weekends, family outings to parks, beaches and tourist spots such as Hahndorf, Gumeracha, Victor Harbour, Barossa Valley and Southern Vales or even attending sporting and cultural events are a good way to spend time.

Further Information

Homestay Team

Ph: (08) 8313 4777

Email: homestay@adelaide.edu.au

Web: www.adelaide.edu.au/elc

English Language Centre
The University of Adelaide
Level 9, 115 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE SA 5005