



GOLD COAST STUDENT ACCOMMODATION CENTRE

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A division of Study Match Pty Ltd ABN 49 122 467 109

INFORMATION FOR HOMESTAY FAMILIES HOMESTAY STATEMENT

A key factor to any successful visit whether for study, work or vacation is accommodation. This is particularly true for students where it is their first time away from their home country and their parents.

We have developed a Homestay and accommodation program to ensure the following core elements:

- That a safe, clean and comfortable environment is provided for the students
- That students have access to their Homestay coordinator 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- That students are not exploited
- That accommodation is situated close to the students' place of study
- That quality accommodation can be found at short notice
- That as much as possible, students' special requirements are taken into consideration, even if they are a little out of the ordinary
- That, when necessary, students will be met at the airport by a reputable Airport Reception Company and will be taken directly to the accommodation provider

The Gold Coast Student Accommodation Centre organises various types of accommodation as follows:

- Homestay
- Room only in a private residence or guest house
- Temporary Accommodation (short stays of 1 – 14 nights)
- Shared Accommodation in Student Accommodation
- Resort or Longer term Motel Accommodation.

The services are available to any organization or individuals. For more information please email info@gcsac.com.au or phone (07) 5527 8688.

The Gold Coast Student and Accommodation Centre (GCSAC) will place students in conjunction with various education providers on The Gold Coast. Some organisations will continue with their own Homestay program and may use GCSAC to handle any overflow situations. Students will also come directly through GCSAC's web-site or from referrals. They will be from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, nationalities and age groups.

GCSAC also organises other types of accommodation for students to provide more options for them. This is to encourage a student who really wanted to be in an apartment with independent living to choose that option rather than to move into a Homestay and create an uncomfortable situation.

Homestay is one of the best options for students enabling them to integrate into the Australian way of life easily. Once they have found their feet and made new friends, they will often move out to an apartment.

Length of Stay

Sometimes a student will arrive at the host family's home and declare that they want to live there for a long time, months or years. However after a short time they may move on. To avoid disappointment, the family should not buy large quantities of items purely for that student only to find that they are left with things that they don't really need.

Due to the fact that we will be placing students from different Colleges, the length of study will vary a great deal. For example students who are doing a University course may be here for a number of years and want Homestay for several months and students who come in on a Study or Group tour may be here for less than a week.

Arrival of Students

GCSAC will often organise airport pickup for students. If they are arriving individually we will encourage the student to use this service as it simplifies procedures. The student's flight is met at the airport and they are taken directly to their place of accommodation. The airport pickup service will notify us if the student does not turn up at the airport or if there is problem with the flight.

When students are in a group or study tour the family may be asked to meet and greet the student at an arranged destination – possibly the student's place of study. When the students leave, the families may be asked to take the student to the same place in order to get a bus back to the airport to catch their designated outbound flight.

Please make sure that you are there to greet the student on the first day. You are expected to stay with the student the first day so that even if they are jet-lagged and want to sleep all day they don't wake up wondering where they are and if anybody is at home.

Shortly after the student's arrival, if the family is not required to transport the student to their place of study each day, they are asked to show the student the bus route and if possible travel the route to the student's place of study. On the first day of study it is of benefit that the family brings the student to school so that they settle in easily.

Shopping and Food

Some families find that taking the student shopping can be an interesting experience to purchase items that the student likes to eat. Please ensure that you do not set a precedent and the student expects you to purchase very expensive foods that you cannot afford to buy on a regular basis. Don't exaggerate purchasing groceries especially for the student as if they do move out unexpectedly you are left with foods that you do not eat. Basic food items such as soy and oyster sauce can be purchased – please see recipes and ideas in the literature.

You are not expected to cook Asian meals, buy Halal meat for Muslim students or provide any other specialty food. However, if you choose to do so occasionally, this may be appreciated by the student. Students from certain backgrounds do not eat bread in their staple diet, but they eat rice instead. If you cook rice on a regular basis you may have fewer problems with a student who doesn't like Australian cuisine as they can help themselves to the rice.

Providing there is enough food in the fridge or cupboard, adult students can make their own packed lunch if required. Some hosts have a special area or fridge for the students to put food items that they purchase themselves. Sometimes a student may offer to cook a meal, but if this turns into a habit, the student may end up feeling that they are expected to cook the meal when they would prefer not to.

Washing, Washing up and Cleaning

The student is to be treated as a member of the family and is expected to clean up after themselves and wipe down the shower and basin after use. Perhaps you could supply a cloth to do this.

They should be encouraged to make their bed, although it is also a good idea to let them feel as though they can do as they wish in their room. If you like you can show the student how to do their own washing or you may prefer to do the washing yourself.

Taking students on outings

If you are going out, encourage the student to come with you – however please make sure that they know what they must pay for. If you are taking the student to a theme-park then the family can expect the student to pay. If you are going out to McDonalds for example for an evening meal which you would otherwise provide then the Host family should pay.

The Gold Coast Tourism Bureau has supplied us with some brochures which contain a wealth of ideas. We have sourced some other brochures which contain maps and discounts for various places on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast Tourism Bureau also has other great brochures in various languages and if you require any extra brochures, please contact them at Ferny Avenue in Surfers Paradise.

Use of the Phone

If you do not want the student to use the telephone, other solutions are available. They can purchase a phone card from newsagents or they could purchase a pre-paid mobile phone, or many students may have a mobile phone before arriving in Australia.

Leaving the student on their own

While it is good to let the student have a certain amount of space to themselves it is not good to leave the student for long periods of time on their own. If you are going away, please let us know so that we can arrange for someone else to look after the student if need be.

Change of Accommodation

If you change the accommodation arrangements for the student, renovate or reorganise additional space to host students, then we will come and visit again to see where we are placing the students. Please don't host students in accommodation that the Homestay Coordinator has not viewed. Occasionally we may have a request from an agent or organisation to show them a Host family's home. We would contact you beforehand to let you know.

Special Needs

There are publications by the Gold Coast City Council which may be of use to find out addresses of special cultural venues. The City Council, Community and Business Guide is one of these. It contains over 2000 listings relating to information about community resources. If a student does ask you to find something out for them, guide them in the right direction and then let them try to help themselves. If you cannot help them and you would like some assistance then please contact the Homestay Coordinator and they will do their best to assist or put the student in touch with the correct person or organisation. The student can also contact the Homestay Coordinator or send an email.

Evaluation

After a short time that the student has been in Homestay they may be asked to complete an evaluation form which asks if they liked their Homestay family, food and if the Homestay family was friendly, etc. If students repeatedly comment on a problem with the Homestay family, for example that the home is not clean or food is not given willingly, then careful consideration will be given to remove the family from the register.

Keeping in Contact

If we don't hear from you, we assume that you have a student or that you are not eager to host and are having a break. If you would like to host students, please keep in contact with our Homestay coordinators. In peak times, ringing regularly is acceptable, however please do not ring and say that you need a student because otherwise you can't pay the rent or rates, etc. We can never guarantee that you will have a student and this can be very embarrassing and puts too much responsibility on our staff.

At times we may ring to tentatively see if you would be free to host a student and then for some reason the student does not come or chooses to go elsewhere. While we are very sorry to inconvenience you, we cannot be held responsible for this situation.

Phone Numbers

If you change your phone number, don't forget to ring us and if you lose your mobile or don't use it often, then let us know so that we are not constantly trying to ring that number.

Payment to the families

All payments to the families will be made by GCSAC. The student will pay GCSAC and we will then make payments to the families on a fortnightly basis directly into your nominated bank account. You will be emailed that the payment has been made. If for any reason there is a problem, please make contact with the Homestay Coordinator.

Moving a student

If it is necessary, the student will be moved to other accommodation even if it was expected that the student should stay longer. We will try to avoid this situation. At times the family may want the student to move before the agreed time. In either case the family is not expected to keep the money for the period that they have not hosted.

Visas

Students come to Australia on different visas. For short term, i.e. one or two weeks stay; the student will probably be on a tourist visa. A student who has a tourist visa may have medical insurance through their travel insurance.

Students also come into Australia on a Student Visa which has been organised by their place of study. This is normally for a longer period of time than just a week or two. In order to stay in Australia on a **student visa, the student must attend class at least 80%** of the time and if not can risk being deported.

Their place of study is obliged to record and report on attendance to the immigration department. If a student who is on a student visa is staying in your home and not attending school, then please encourage them to go to school. If they are sick, they must go to the doctor to get a medical certificate to present to their place of study so that they will not be marked absent from school.

Students on student visas will have medical insurance organised by their place of study. This could be World Care Assist or Medibank Private and in any case they will have a card or a number to show if they need medical assistance.

Hygiene

Sometimes this area can be a problem for the host or the student. Students from other cultures may stand on the toilet seat, throw used toilet paper in the bin or expect to wash themselves after using the toilet, either in a bidet or by using a bottle of water and splashing themselves down. They may spit and snort in the shower to clear their nasal passages. They may sniff loudly rather than use a handkerchief as they think that using a handkerchief is dirty. Some students from some cultures (even ours) may spend hours in the bathroom even though they are not using water constantly.

Be in Control

While every effort should be made to keep the student happy try to ensure that the student does not take advantage of you and your family. Ensure that limits are set.

House Rules

A short list of rules should be placed on the back of the student's bedroom door so that they may look up the words in their dictionary if need be. (See attached suggested sheet)

Problems

These should be brought to the student's attention immediately as leaving things unsaid until later will result in great embarrassment for the student.

Homestay Family Pack

These packs have been made up to assist you in hosting students and you may like to add your own personal touches to each pack. Please keep the information up to date by replenishing the supply. Encourage the students to use the information but not to take it with them unless you want to keep replacing it.

Homestay Families

GCSAC would like to have a solid base of Homestay families and it is paramount that we have a good relationship with you. Please feel free to telephone to discuss any problems. We value your time and appreciate any suggestions that you may have to assist others in hosting students. We acknowledge that without families there would be no Homestay program.