



HOMESTAY FAMILY INFORMATION



**HAMILTON BOYS'
HIGH SCHOOL**
Te Kura Tamatāne o Kirikiriroa

Hamilton Boys' High School

Welcome to our homestay family community

Hamilton Boys' High School has a very strong international programme. Most of our students are from Asia, more specifically Japan and China. However, every year we welcome boys from around the world.

The success of our international fee-paying students' programme is dependent upon the quality of care the students receive from their homestay family. Our families need to be caring, tolerant and willing to be involved in the lives of their students.

We are here to act as a support to families, (both homestay and offshore), and the students.



What is a homestay family?

It is when a New Zealand family welcomes an international student into their home and treats them like one of their own children.

A homestay family is different from staying in a hotel or Airbnb. As a family member your student will be included in all family activities, such as going away on day trips, celebrating family occasions and helping in the house with some small chores. The first few weeks might be a bit of an adjustment so be patient and help your student understand what is expected from them.

For your student, living in a new country means adapting to new foods, customs, and ways of doing things. It can be overwhelming for them, and it is completely normal for them to feel homesick or find things a bit strange at first. Please help your student adapt and encourage them to embrace these feelings as part of their adventure.

Being away from family and friends in an unfamiliar setting can make students feel homesick. During these times, homestay reassurance and support is crucial.

Staying in touch with the International Centre at HBHS is essential. The staff there are available to assist and support you with any questions or issues that may arise.

As a member of your family, students will be welcomed into all activities, such as going on day trips, celebrating family events, and helping with light chores around the house.

The first few weeks may take some time to adjust, but please remember that if you ever need support or have any questions, we are here to help.

Living with your family, your student will be well taken care of, and there will always be someone to talk to if they are feeling down, unwell, or facing any challenges.

Moving to a new country comes with adapting to new foods, customs, and ways of life, and it's completely natural for your student to feel homesick or find things unfamiliar at first. Staying with a homestay family is a fantastic opportunity for them to experience our culture firsthand and enhance their language skills.

Your student will need constant reminders about family rules and expectations. Please don't expect that if you tell him once he will remember. It is an ongoing process. Teenagers can be unpredictable, thoughtless and uncommunicative at times. Small problems can be resolved if they are discussed. As the parent/s it will be your responsibility to continually initiate these conversations.

We hope you enjoy the experience but please feel free to reach out if you have a question or are unsure about something!



Some Tips

Clear Communication

You need to establish clear guidelines about the house rules, such as mealtimes, bathroom etiquette, quiet hours, and any other expectations you might have. At the same time, please be receptive to their questions and needs, offering them a platform where they can openly share their thoughts and concerns.

Cultural Exchange

One of the biggest benefits of being a homestay family is the opportunity for cultural exchange. Please encourage conversations about each other's cultures, traditions, and experiences. This helps your student feel valued and gives you a chance to learn from them as well.

Safety and Privacy

Ensuring your student feels safe is crucial. This includes providing a secure space where they can relax, sleep, and study. Respecting their privacy is equally important, as they may need time to adjust and may not always be comfortable sharing everything. At the same time, you need to be there when they need support.

Meals

Please provide a balanced diet, taking into consideration any dietary restrictions or preferences they might have. Regular meals are essential, and it's nice to include him in meal preparation if he is interested in learning how to cook local dishes.

Support in Adjusting to Local Life

Especially for a new student to NZ, please guide them through everyday life. Helping him get acquainted with public transport, local customs, manners. Provide guidance for any emergencies, medical needs, or unfamiliar situations.

Flexibility and Patience

Adjusting to a new place and culture can be overwhelming. As a homestay family, you need to be understanding and patient. There may be moments when your student feels homesick or faces challenges, and it's your role to offer emotional support and practical advice.

Special Occasions

Homesickness and culture shock are to be expected. Preparing a special meal, celebrating his birthday, going to watch his soccer/rugby game, taking him to the beach, the movies, the museum or an inexpensive activity are all little acts of kindness which will help him feel like a member of your family.

As a homestay family, you are expected to create a nurturing environment that helps your student feel supported, safe, and integrated into their new surroundings.

Expectations, Rules and Reminders

Start as you mean to continue regarding the family rules and expectations. Teenagers need to be given the same message many times before it becomes a habit.

- Provide the student with his own bedroom, bed, linen, towels, electric blanket or heater, desk and wardrobe. Also, breakfast, (school) lunch, snacks and dinner every day.
- Include him in family outings and occasions and make him feel a part of the family. Please encourage your student to join you for family outings; this is all part of the kiwi experience.
- Sit down for evening meals together as a family when possible and insist that your student be part of the family mealtime.
- Attend to the student's laundry.
- Support your student to get to/from school each day by bus, bike or car. Help him purchase a BEE Card and remind him to keep the BEE card topped up.
- Extra-curricular involvement is a very important part of our International Programme. We must have your support to get boys to/from sports fixtures and cultural events in the evenings or on weekends.
- Ensure your student attends school every day and make sure he has a note from you explaining any absences. If your student is unwell and unable to attend school, you must inform the school - absences@hbhs.school.nz
- If your student wishes to visit a friend after school, or to stay away for the night, you must confirm the suitability of these arrangements and have an address and phone number of where he is. This is most important. You must always know where your student is.



Expectations, Rules and Reminders

- Students are not permitted to own or drive a car. Your student can only travel in a car with you, HBHS staff or someone you permit (this person must be over 25 years old and hold a full NZ driver's license).
- Students are expected to pay for expenses such as bus fares, and entertainment over and above normal family outings.
- At the end of the academic year, students are expected to pack-up all their belongings. If they are returning to you, you must discuss with them what is acceptable to leave behind and where their belongings will be stored. If their bedroom is to be used over the Christmas period, the student must fully clear his room.
- Many overseas students keep very late hours on technology. This affects their attendance and progress at school. Please ensure that the suggested bedtime of 10.30pm is adhered to. This may be a source of conflict, but it is one that we must have your support with.
- Your student is expected to make his bed and tidy his room each day, to put his washing out and to help with small tasks such as clearing the dinner table, drying the dishes, or unstacking the dishwasher. If issues are starting to arise regarding any of these day-to-day expectations, have a conversation with your student.
- You must be able to enter his bedroom, as you would your own child and remind him what needs to be done daily, for example, opening the bedroom windows/curtains, removing rubbish, laundry in the washing basket, getting up on time for school and going to bed on time. He is a teenager and will need to be told repeatedly.
- Please monitor your student's personal hygiene and ensure that he showers each day and washes his hands after going to the toilet.



Please contact the school immediately if you suspect your student has breached any rules eg. vaping, smoking, consuming alcohol, driving, curfews etc

Homesickness and culture shock are to be expected. Preparing a special meal, celebrating his birthday, going to watch his soccer/rugby game, taking him to the beach, the movies, the museum or an inexpensive activity are all little acts of kindness which will help him to feel a member of your family.

Student Travel

No student is permitted to travel overnight without adult supervision. It is your responsibility to know that your student is always safe and that there is adult supervision.



For a student to be able to stay in a hotel or motel he must:

- Be accompanied by an adult 25 years of age or older
- Have been granted permission from the International Centre
- Have parents consent via email to the International Centre

You cannot leave your student at home overnight without adult supervision.

If your student wishes to go on a Day Trip they must ask the Homestay Manager for a Permission Form which needs to be completed by the student, signed by the homestay parents and given to the Homestay Manager at least two weeks before their planned travel date. The leave request will then be assessed, and they will be informed if it has been approved or not.



If your student would like to invite a friend to stay or stay at a friend's home, they must discuss it with you first. The homestay family must contact the friend's family/homestay family to discuss arrangements and make sure there will be adult supervision, just like you would do for your own child.

There are educational tour providers that offer trips for international students during mid-term breaks, which come highly recommended. For more information, your student can contact the International Centre.

Illness/Medical

If your student is feeling unwell, you must inform the school that your student will not be at school. You can email the school at absences@hbhs.school.nz or the International Centre.

Contact details

If your student needs to see a doctor there are several options; your local doctor,

- Tui Medical Te Rapa Urgent Care (26 Bryant Road, Te Rapa) which is open 24 hours or
- Victoria Clinic – Urgent Care (173 Anglesea Street, Hamilton) which is open between 08:00am – 08:00pm, 7 days per week.

There are also two options for an online consultation with a doctor;

- Emergency Consult emergencyconsult.co.nz and
- Pocket Lab pocketlab.nz

Your student needs to pay for his doctor's visit and any prescriptions. Keep the receipts and share with the international centre and we will help the student claim for their medical expenses from their insurance company.



Homestay Fees



Homestay payments are handled by the school administration. They will be paid two weeks in advance. The homestay fee for 2026 is **\$375** per week, and **\$180** for a set-leave weekend for our hostel students.

If a student returns home during the 2-week mid-term breaks there will be no change to homestay payments, or retainer fees. You will receive the full weekly payment, in keeping in line with other schools.

At the end of the academic year, it is expected that students will take all of their belongings with them. However many student have accumulated too many possessions to take home with them. If your student is returning to your home it is reasonable to allow them to store one or two suitcases. If they are leaving behind an excessive amount of personal items that cannot be contained within one or two suitcases please inform the homestay manager well in advance of the departure date so that arrangements can be made for a one-off storage payment. If your student is not returning to your home all personal items must be removed.

Food

Food is an extremely important factor in how well your student will settle. Talk to your student about the types of foods that he likes or dislikes.



Most families enjoy a variety of different types of food, please try and prepare meals that your student will enjoy. Encourage him to show you how to cook a favourite meal or to ask his parent for an easy recipe from his home country.

It can be helpful to take your student to the supermarket to talk about foods that they like and dislike. Keep a good supply of after school snacks, such as 2-minute noodles, muesli bars, and fruit in the pantry.

Many of our international students like to bring food that can be warmed up for lunch. It is a good idea when cooking an evening meal to make an extra portion that can be put in a container for the student's lunch the next day. For our Asian students, lunch is their main meal of the day, and they do expect food that can be heated. Our fee-paying international student have access to a microwave to re-heat food and boiling water.



**HAMILTON BOYS'
HIGH SCHOOL**

Te Kura Tamatāne o Kirikiriroa

Ms Ann Halpin | International Homestay Manager

ahalpin@hbhs.school.nz

Ms Tonia Heeps | Director of International Students

theeps@hbhs.school.nz

www.hbhs.school.nz
