
Make a Difference - Host an International Student in your Home

St. Lawrence College is seeking people who would be interested in sharing their home with international students.

Hosting an international student is an enriching experience that enables you and your family to create memories that will last a life time and take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to learn about other cultures without ever leaving home! Every semester, we welcome international students from different countries around the world who come to SLC to study English; therefore, their language skills range from basic to advanced. All academic programs require students to have a high level of English-speaking proficiency, but these students often choose Homestay as a way to practice their language skills and fully immerse themselves in Canadian culture.

What Makes a Great Host Family? If your family wishes to take part in a cultural exchange and can provide necessary living accommodations and an emotionally supportive environment to a young person from a different culture, then you will make a great host family! A great host family appreciates that each student is unique and will have their own processes of adapting and taking advantage of the experience. Good communication skills and patience are required, as it can take some time for students to adjust.

Host families are expected to treat the student like another member of the family, and create opportunities for them to participate activities in various activities. While financial compensation is important, it cannot be the motivational factor behind hosting an international student.

Responsibilities of the Host Families

- 1. Room and Living Accommodation:** Provide a private room with all basic living accommodations (bed, linens, dresser or wardrobe, nightstand, lamp, and appropriate amount of space for the student's belongings). Students are expected to keep their own room clean. If you have someone who cleans your house, please be sure to communicate this with your student. Students are responsible for providing their own shampoo, shower gel, and other hygiene/toiletry products.
- 2. Laundry:** Laundry facilities and detergent are included in the price of Homestay. Students are responsible for washing their own clothes. Laundry instructions/expectations should be communicated and shown to the student. If you are a Homestay family who lives in an apartment with coin operated machines, you should provide the student with money to use laundry machines. Students may come with limited luggage and may need laundry access more than once a week.
- 3. Internet:** Provide a stable internet connection. *Unlimited recommended.*
- 4. Alcohol usage/smoking:** Some students may drink alcohol or smoke. If alcohol is not used in your home, please respect students' choices outside of the home within reason. Be sure to indicate your rules prior to the students' arrival.
- 5. Food:** Provide three nutritious meals and snacks. As much as possible, dinner should be served in a family gathering. If the family goes out for a meal (and this meal replaces one which should be served at home),

the host family should pay the bill. The family should discuss with the students how to proceed for breakfast and lunch. Students should inform the family if they cannot be home for dinner. Homestay families need to be aware of dietary restrictions (preferences, allergies, etc.). We suggest taking the student with you to the grocery store occasionally so that you can get a sense of what kind of foods they like to eat. A variety of food should be easily accessible for the student.

Please note: *Please keep in mind that students can be very shy about making food requests, and often will not communicate their preferences (e.g. portions, likes and dislikes). It is important to discuss this with the student.*

6. **Safety:** Provide a safe living accommodation (smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, clear exit routes).
7. **Placement length:** Our Homestay contract requires students to sign a 4-month contract. On occasion, you may be requested to have a shorter term student/professor for special programs.
8. **Curfew:** Curfews are not encouraged. Students are informed that it is important to be respectful of some house rules and should not disturb the household.
International students are young adults, and just like Canadian young adults, they will have varying degrees of confidence and doubt, responsibility, forgetfulness, and occasional laziness. The level of your involvement will vary according dependent on the students' age and maturity level. Please remember it is important to have patience, consistency, flexibility, and good communication with the student to avoid major problems in the home.
9. **Houseguests:** Students should ask their host families permission when wishing to have a friend come over for the day, or stay for the night.
10. **Cleaning:** Students are responsible for keeping their rooms clean and are encouraged to help the family with light household chores such as helping clean up after dinner, doing their dishes, etc. For some students, participating in house chores may be something new. Instructions may be needed (cleaning out the sink; not flushing hygiene products, putting a mat down on the floor before/after you shower, using shower curtain, etc.).
11. **Distance from the College:** Must live at a reasonable distance from the College and live near a bus route.

Homestay Placement Details

1. **Remuneration:** The Homestay families will receive CAD\$30.00 per day per student and Homestay fees are due on the 1st of each month. The student must pay the Homestay family directly and the payment methods should be discussed between the student and family (cash, email transfer, etc.). Some students may need a few days to arrange for banking in Canada. They may need some assistance with this.
2. **Trial Period:** *The first 2 weeks is a trial period. If the student decides that this placement is not suitable within the first 14 nights, the Homestay Coordinator will help them look for other accommodations. Student will be allowed to move out only if really necessary. **After the trial period**, the students must commit for the rest of the stay.*
3. **Student Absences:** *In the event your student plans to be away from the home for more than a week, a reduced daily rate will apply beginning on the eighth day at CAD\$15.00 per day.*

- 4. Placement length:** Minimum stay of 4 months required.
 - 5. Moving Out:** If the student decides to leave the home before the end of the semester, a 30-day notice must be given to the homestay host, and a CAD\$15.00 per day fee will be paid to the homestay host for the period remaining (except in very unusual circumstances and by agreement of the host).
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Application Process

1. Fill out the **Host Family Application form** at the end of this document.
 2. Provide a **brief description of your family and a photo**. This will be given to the student.
 3. Provide a recent **Criminal Record Check** (within last 3 years) for every member of the family over the age of 18.
 4. Send your complete application package to your Homestay Coordinator:
Heather Lahey: homestay.kingston@sl.on.ca (Kingston)
Carolle Boudreau: homestay.cornwall@sl.on.ca (Cornwall)
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Mandatory Home Visit

A home visit is a required before a student is placed into your home. This visit will be scheduled after the application has been reviewed. This will also be the time for you to discuss any concerns that you may have. We cannot guarantee you will have a student each semester. The Homestay Coordinator will review the student profile and the family profile and try to make the best match. You will be given as much notice as possible.

Arrival

As expected, there is often a period of adjustment for the student. For many students this is their first time experiencing a new culture away from home. You should expect your student to feel some homesickness, have difficulty communicating, and the occasional outpour of tears. Students are adjusting to a new home, culture, school system, way of learning, communicating, and the academic workload, which can be overwhelming. In the beginning, many students will need a lot of information and support from their Homestay families.

Keep in mind the student will not be able to absorb everything the first day and, in fact, won't be able to understand everything you say to them. You will need to explain things more than once. Though we often enjoy the humor and novelty of cultural differences, we need to be sensitive to discomforts and difficulties the student is facing. What you take as slowness, thoughtlessness, or rudeness may only be a mutual misunderstanding of signals and expectations.

Once you have been matched with a student, the Homestay Coordinator will send a Family Introduction email to the student and the Homestay family introducing both of you. At that point, arrival plans should be made. Students are expected to get to a Kingston or Cornwall transit point (train, bus, airport) and the Homestay family should arrange for pick up at that location. This is the Homestay Coordinator's responsibility to communicate this to the student. It is also recommended to communicate with the student before they arrive as this will help them feel more comfortable and welcomed.

Early/late arrivals must be indicated on the student's application form for planning purposes so that the Homestay family can ensure they are prepared.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Can I accept more than one student?*

- Absolutely. If your family is ready, and you have suitable space in your home that is okay with us.

2. *Can I still host a student if I live in a one-person household?*

- Yes, if you can provide an active and socially involved experience for the student. This will be at the discretion of the Homestay Coordinator.

3. *Do I need to claim my monthly payment on my taxes?*

- Yes, you would need to claim the rental portion on your taxes as income. The rental portion is CAD\$15.00 per day.

4. *Are Homestay families expected to take the student to school every day?*

- This is expected the first few days to help the student settle in. The Homestay family should research bus routes in their neighborhood and be prepared to teach the student how they can take the bus to school. It is helpful to ride the bus with the student, or write this down for them to follow.

5. *Who is the first point of contact if a problem arises?*

- Your Homestay Coordinator should be your first point of contact for advice, or if a problem arises. Usually the Homestay Coordinator will liaise with the International Student Advisor on the appropriate campus for further action. If you cannot reach the Homestay Coordinator, or they are on vacation, please contact the International Student Advisor.

6. *Can I be a Homestay family even if I will be away on vacation for 2 weeks?*

- If you travel often (each week, or for a week each month, or more) the student may not benefit from the full experience. Yes, you can go away for several days, but this is important to consider if you are away a long period.

7. *When are payments due?*

- Payments are due on the first day of every month. It is the students' responsibility to provide you with a payment.

8. Is a host family required to pick students up at the airport or bus/train station?

- While this is not your responsibility, this is encouraged as it creates an initial bond with the student when he/she is welcomed into the city by their new family / host. Otherwise, the Homestay Coordinator must ensure that the student is met at their arrival point, transferred to the Homestay location and communicate with the host about the arrival date / time so that someone can be home to welcome the student.

Date: _____

1 Instructions

Thank you for your interest in becoming a host family for our homestay program. Please complete the following application, typing or printing clearly with a ballpoint pen. The information provided helps us to select an appropriate student for your home.

2 Host's Information

Family Name:		Given Name:		Date of Birth (YYYY/MM/DD):					
Address:									
City:			Postal Code:			E-mail:			
Telephone Number(S) Home:			Cell:			Work:			

3 Family Members

List all the people who live in your home: **(including yourself)**

Name	Relationship	Date of Birth (Day/Month/Year)	Occupation	Work Schedule (days, hours)	First Language

4 General Information

- Have you ever had an international student stay in your home? If yes, what nationality, how long and when did he / she stay?
 Yes No Nationality: _____ Length of Stay: _____
- Briefly describe your home.
 Number of Bedrooms: _____ Number of Bathrooms: _____
 Social Area: _____ Other: _____
- Describe the room where the student will sleep. (Please note that we require that the students have a private bedroom with bed, dresser, and desk with suitable lighting for study).
 Location: _____ Furniture: _____
- The student would have:
 a private bathroom
 a shared bathroom

SLC International Homestay Program

Host Family Application Form



5. Most of our students will be relying on public transportation. Homes must be close to a bus route and be at a reasonable distance from the College. Please describe how long a walk it is from your home to the bus stop, what bus number(s) the student would have to take, and how long (in minutes) the bus ride would be from your home to campus.

6. How many students are you able to host? _____

7. Do you prefer: Female Student(s) or Male Student(s)? No Preference

8. Pet Information - Please provide number(s), name(s), size(s) and breed(s)

Cats: _____ Dogs: _____ Other: _____

9. Does any family member smoke? Yes No

Do you allow smoking in your home? Yes No

10. Would you allow a student to bring alcohol into the house? Yes No

11. Are there any musical instruments or sports equipment in your house that the student may use? Yes No

If "Yes", please describe: _____

12. Are there dietary prohibitions in your home (e.g. vegetarian)? Please explain.

13. Are you willing to help with transportation in emergencies and on special occasions and on an irregular recreational basis? Yes No

14. Write anything else that you feel is important for student(s) to know about your household (food, laundry, family rules, etc.).

15. What language(s) do you speak in your household? (check all that apply)

English

Other Please describe: _____

16. Preferred time for screening interview by homestay coordinator.

5 Family Life and Interests

1. Why are you interested in hosting an international student?

2. Does your family have any hobbies, interests or sports activities in which the student could participate?

3. To gauge the amount of time your family will be able to spend with a student, please describe your family's daily routine (weekday & weekend) and other commitments.

6 References

1. Please provide the names and telephone numbers of two people that can be contacted for references:

First Reference: Name: _____ Phone: _____

Second Reference: Name: _____ Phone: _____

2. Are there any additional comments you wish to make?

7 Checklist of Documents to Include

- Complete Host Family Application Form
- Criminal Record Checks for all adult members of the household over the age of 18
- Family Photos (These may be e-mailed)
- Photos of the Home (These may be e-mailed)

8 Mailing Instructions

Please send your application package to your Homestay Coordinator:

Heather Lahey (Kingston)
E-mail: homestay.kingston@sl.on.ca

Carolle Boudreau (Cornwall)
Email: homestay.cornwall@sl.on.ca