



COQUITLAM
COLLEGE

Established 1982

Homestay manual

For Students



2920 Virtual Way, Vancouver BC V05
www.coquitlamcollege.com

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Welcome to the Coquitlam College Homestay Program!

We are so excited to have you as part of our homestay community. Whether you are a student beginning your journey in Canada or a family opening your home, this program is built on a spirit of connection, learning, and care.

Homestay is about more than accommodation—it's about building relationships. Students gain a safe and welcoming home where they can grow academically and personally, while families experience the joy of sharing their culture and making lasting connections across the world. Together, these experiences create friendships and memories that often last a lifetime.

We celebrate the diversity of our community and believe every homestay placement is a unique opportunity to learn from one another. By approaching each day with kindness, openness, and curiosity, you'll find that homestay is not only rewarding but also deeply enriching.

Our team is here to support you at every step. If questions or challenges arise, we will work with you to find solutions—but we know that, most of all, your time in this program will be filled with learning, laughter, and new possibilities.

Thank you for being part of the Coquitlam College Homestay Program. We are committed to ensuring your experience is safe, positive, and meaningful.

Warm regards,

Penelope Cruz
Homestay Coordinator
Coquitlam College



HOMESTAY EXPECTATIONS

Living with a Canadian host family is a unique opportunity to learn English, experience Canadian culture, and build lifelong connections. Your homestay is not just about housing—it is about belonging, sharing, and growing through new experiences.

Your host family will support you, but your experience will also depend on your willingness to be open, respectful, and curious.

Remember that Canadian families come from many different cultural, social, and religious backgrounds. There is no single “Canadian way” of living. Your adjustment will take time, and that’s normal.



❖ ARRIVAL & GETTING STARTED

When you first arrive:

- You will be given house access (key, alarm code if applicable).
- Your host family will show you how to get to Coquitlam College on your first day.
- If you are not within walking distance, they will help you learn how to take public transit and buy a bus pass.

Tip: Your host family may give you a welcome letter with house routines, meal times, and Wi-Fi details. **Take time to review this information.**

Adjustment: It is normal to feel jet lag, homesickness, or even regret at first. Be patient with yourself and give yourself time to settle in. Talking openly with your host family helps.

- Communication is most often the key to avoiding and resolving problems. It is important to talk to your homestay family and the homestay coordinator at the College. We are all here to help you adjust and enjoy your experience in Canada

❖ BEING OPEN-MINDED

- Struggling is part of growth. Feeling sad, lonely, or uncomfortable at times is normal—and it will help you learn resilience.
- Stay open-minded about your experiences and live honestly and respectfully.
- Being a guest in another culture is also being a learner. Give yourself and your host family the chance to learn together.



GETTING SETTLED

- Remember, your host family is not a hotel.
- Participate in daily life; help set the table, empty the dishwasher, walk the dog, or join family meals.
- Share stories and photos about your family and culture.
- Communicate clearly when you are going out or coming home late. Your family needs to know you are safe.
- Respect house rules, even if they feel different from what you are used to. Rules help everyone live together comfortably.
- Discomfort is normal. Not every homestay will feel perfect. Sometimes things are just “okay”—and that’s okay. These moments are part of adapting to a new culture.

❖ COMMUNICATION & CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Ask questions instead of assuming. Facial expressions and gestures may mean different things across cultures.
- Language barriers are normal. Be patient with yourself and your host family. If you don't understand, ask them to repeat or explain.
- Stay curious. If something feels rude or confusing, ask for clarification before reacting.
- Avoid stereotypes. Just as you want to be seen as an individual, so does your host family.

Conversation Tips:



Be open about your feelings and needs



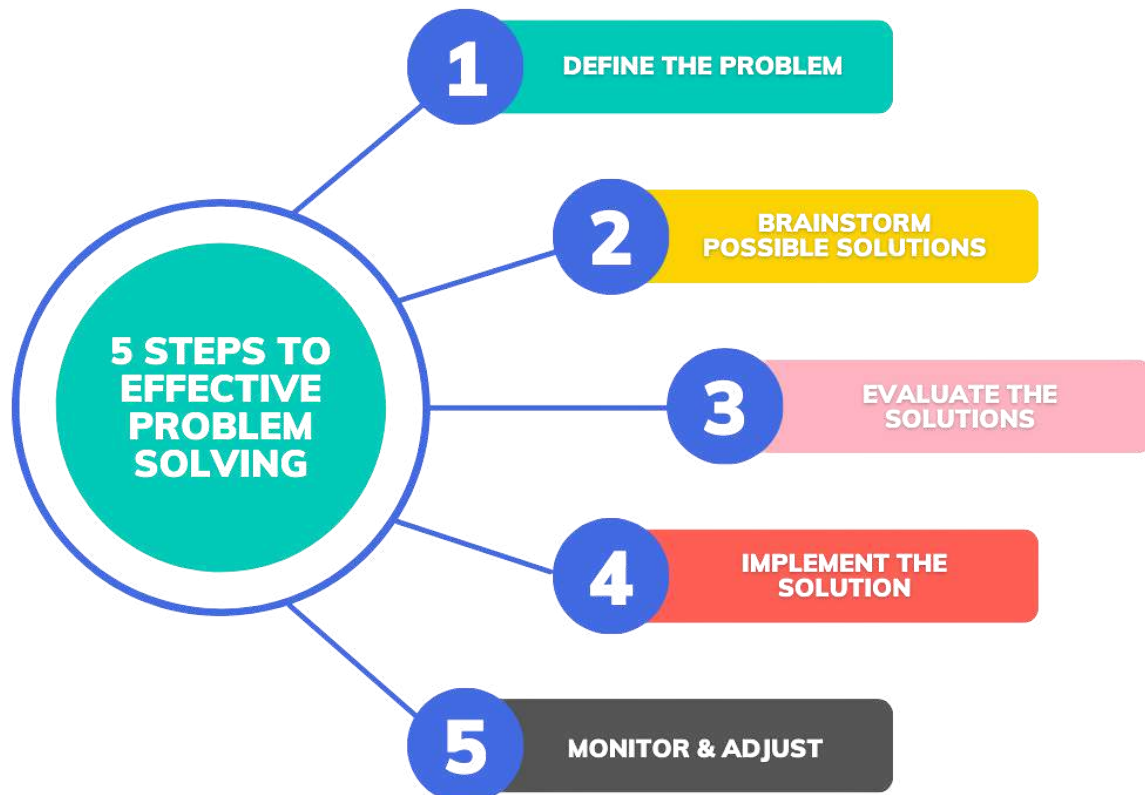
Listen with genuine curiosity



Work together to find solutions if conflicts arise



Speak honestly but kindly





HOUSE RULES & RESPONSABILITIES

Alcohol & Smoking:

The legal drinking age in B.C. is 19. Drinking, using illicit drugs, vaping, and smoking are not permitted in the home.

Cell Phone & Internet:

- You are responsible for your own phone and data charges.

Pets:

- If you are uncomfortable around pets, let the Homestay Coordinator know.

Showers & Baths:

- Please limit shower time and share hot water with your family.
- Try to keep showers within a reasonable time (10–15 minutes).

Respect & Boundaries:

- Treat your host family with the same respect you would give your own family.
- They will set rules for their home, and you are expected to follow them.



CLEANING & HOUSEHOLD TASKS

- You are expected to keep your own space tidy and clean up after yourself.
- Help with family chores when asked—this shows respect and helps you feel part of the household.
- Bathrooms in Canadian homes are not designed to get completely wet. Please keep water inside the shower or bathtub.

Your host family may remind you about cleaning or house rules. This is part of learning and adapting. Be patient—with yourself and with them.

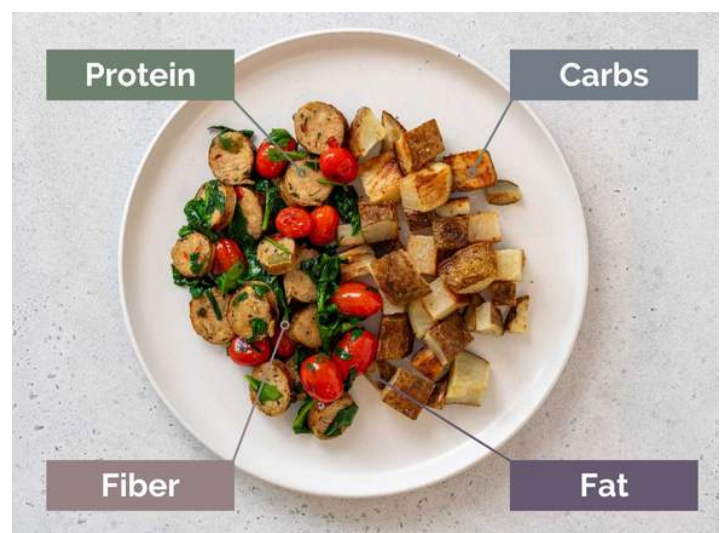
You are expected to participate in household cleaning and take care of your own spaces.

- You must keep your bedroom clean and tidy.
- You are responsible for cleaning the bathroom you use.
- Everyone in the home shares basic chores, and you are expected to participate.

There are no excuses for refusing to participate in cleaning. Consistently ignoring these responsibilities may be considered misconduct and could affect your place in the Homestay Program.



- Be open to trying Canadian foods, even if they do not become your favorite.
- Share your own food traditions. Offer to cook a meal from your culture.
- Communicate politely about dislikes. Hosts may not know unless you tell them.
- Expect that your host family will serve home-cooked meals most nights, but sometimes there may be take-out or frozen meals. That is normal.
- If you feel there are ongoing issues with food portions or preferences, speak to your host family first. If needed, the Homestay Coordinator can help.



Canada's food guide **Eat well. Live well.**

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

- Have plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Eat protein foods
- Make water your drink of choice
- Choose whole grain foods

Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat

- Be mindful of your eating habits
- Cook more often
- Enjoy your food
- Eat meals with others
- Use food labels
- Limit foods high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat
- Be aware of food marketing

Discover your food guide at **Canada.ca/FoodGuide**

Health Canada Santé Canada

Canada

A balanced lunch might include:

- A protein (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs, beans, etc.)
- A grain or starch (rice, pasta, bread, etc.)
- A fruit or vegetable
- A snack (yogurt, granola bar, nuts, etc.)
- A drink (water, juice, or milk)



You are responsible for purchasing any special snacks you would like to have.

“Food is one of the best ways to share culture. It is more than nutrition—it is about memory, family, and tradition.”



CUSTODIANSHIP

If you are under 19 years old, Canadian law requires that you have a custodian while studying in British Columbia. A custodian is an adult who lives in Canada (often your homestay parent) and takes legal responsibility for your care and safety while you are here.

Your custodian's role is to:

- Support you in day-to-day matters.
- Be available in case of emergencies.
- Help guide you if safety concerns arise.

Your responsibility as a student:

- You must notify your custodian (and your host family) if you are going on a trip, staying overnight somewhere else, or if your plans change.
- Always provide them with emergency contact information and details of where you are going.
- Notify them if you are running late for dinner, or if you are planning to go out.



CODE OF CONDUCT

Being part of the Coquitlam College Homestay Program means respecting your host family, their home, and the community. Students are expected to:

- Show respect to their host family and household members.
- Follow house rules, including curfews, meal times, and cleaning responsibilities.
- Communicate openly about plans, concerns, or problems.
- Participate in family life and contribute to shared responsibilities.
- Respect Canadian laws and cultural norms.
- Take responsibility for arriving at school on time. Homestay families are not babysitters and will not be responsible for waking you up or ensuring you leave on time.
- Pay homestay fees on time and in full, according to the agreed method of payment.

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISCONDUCT

The Homestay Program provides support and guidance, but students are responsible for correcting their own behavior. Students will be given **three opportunities** to correct misconduct after warnings and support from the Homestay Coordinator.

If the same problems continue after these opportunities, the student may be removed from the Homestay Program.

If a student is removed from a homestay due to misconduct, the Homestay Department will not arrange another placement. In this case, the student will be responsible for finding their own accommodation.

Examples of Misconduct Leading to Removal

- Repeatedly ignoring homestay rules despite warnings.
- Disrespectful or aggressive behavior toward host family members or the Homestay Coordinator.
- Use of drugs, alcohol, or smoking under the legal age or in prohibited areas.
- Illegal activity or breaking Canadian laws.
- Refusing to participate in household responsibilities (e.g., cleaning room, bathroom, or tidying up after meals).
- Any behavior that endangers the safety of themselves or others.
- Late or unpaid homestay fees.



HOMESTAY PAYMENT

You are responsible for paying your homestay fee directly to your host family.

In our efforts to provide the best possible experience for our students and homestay parents, we have carefully evaluated the cost of living associated with different zones. As a result, we will be implementing new rates into two categories based on proximity to the new campus:

Coquitlam + Tri Cities :

- \$1350 CAD including 3 meals per day.
- *Holiday rate* is \$25
- *Daily rate* is \$45 CAD.

Vancouver/Burnaby:

- \$1450 CAD including 3 meals per day.
- *Holiday rate* is \$25 cad
- *Daily rate* is \$48 CAD.

A “holiday” is when a student is away from the homestay for two weeks or more but wishes to keep their room reserved. In this case, the student pays a holiday holding fee of \$25 per day for the days they are absent.

This reduced rate recognizes that while the student is not using all homestay services during their absence, you are still keeping their room available for them. Families should not charge the full monthly rate when students are away on holiday for two weeks or longer.

IMPORTANT

- Homestay families cannot ask for extra money for things like soap, toilet paper, or laundry detergent.
- Hosts may not ask for a damage deposit.

Payment Options:

- E-transfer (recommended for ease and security)
- PayPal
- Cash

You should confirm with your host family at the start of your placement which payment method you will use (e-transfer, PayPal, or cash) so that everyone is clear and comfortable.



MOVE OUT POLICY

- The first month of the Homestay Program serves as a trial period. During this time, students may request to move to a different homestay at the end of the month if the current placement is not suitable for them.
- After the first month, students must give two weeks' notice and can give notice at any time throughout the month. For example, if a student pays the homestay fee on October 1st and informs you on October 15th that they plan to move, they have provided the correct two weeks' notice.
- Students must provide **written** notice to their host family if they plan to move. Notice can be given at any time during the month, but a minimum of two weeks' notice is required to avoid a penalty in homestay fees. If less than two weeks' notice is given, students will be charged a penalty equal to the remaining days. For example, if a student provides only 10 days' notice, they will pay a penalty for the additional 4 days at the daily rate of \$45-48.00 per day.

If you are under 19 years old, you must also:

- Provide two weeks' notice to the Homestay Coordinator.
- Provide a notarized copy of your new custodian (must be over 25 years old and a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident).
- Provide a letter of approval from your parents/guardians.
- Attend a meeting with your parents/guardians (arranged by the College) to confirm the decision.

In most situations, we encourage students and host families to first talk through challenges together, with the support of the Homestay Coordinator if needed. Relocation is usually considered only after there has been a conversation and an effort to find solutions. This helps everyone learn and grow through the experience. That said, we understand there are times when relocation may be necessary right away, such as in the case of a family emergency or other serious circumstances.



REASONS TO MOVE OUT OF A HOMESTAY

Valid Reasons to Move Out of a Homestay

- Safety concerns (e.g., feeling unsafe in the home or neighborhood).
- Host family repeatedly breaking homestay guidelines (e.g., not providing meals, charging extra fees, ignoring rules of the program).
- Serious, unresolved conflicts after discussions with the host family and Homestay Coordinator.
- Family emergencies (student's family situation requiring relocation).
- Health needs (e.g., allergies, medical conditions) that cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- Host family circumstances change (e.g., moving, illness, or other life events making hosting no longer possible).

Reasons Not Applicable for Moving Out

- Personal preference for a different location or house after settling in.
- Minor disagreements that have not been discussed with the host family or Coordinator.
- Wanting to live closer to friends.
- Not liking the family's food variety (unless it becomes a repeated, unresolved issue after discussion).
- Expecting hotel-style service (homestay is about being part of a family, not receiving full-time service).
- Small cultural differences or misunderstandings that can be worked through with communication.

Limits on Relocation

Students are permitted to move to a new homestay a maximum of two times per year. This policy encourages students to work through challenges and build positive relationships with their host families.

Exceptions may be made if a host family experiences an emergency (such as illness, moving, or other circumstances) and requests a relocation for the student.



SAFETY

Your safety is our top priority. Canada is generally a safe country, but it's important to take precautions and use good judgment in your daily life.

At Home

- Learn the evacuation routes in your homestay in case of fire or emergency.
- Know where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it.
- Ask your host family to show you how to lock doors and windows securely.
- Always carry your host family's contact information.

In the Community

- Avoid walking alone late at night, especially in unfamiliar areas.
- Do not meet strangers from the internet without first discussing it with your host family or friends you trust.
- Keep your valuables secure and do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Always wear seatbelts in vehicles and follow traffic rules when cycling or walking.

EMERGENCY

Medical Emergencies

- Dial 911 if you need immediate police, fire, or medical help.
- If you feel sick or need medical attention, let your host family know right away so they can help you access care.

Contacts for Help

- Coquitlam College Homestay Emergency (after hours): 604-314-1289 or 604-818-6631
- BC Helpline for Children: 1-800-663-9122 (for safety concerns at home or school).
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 (24/7 confidential counselling).
- Kelty Mental Health: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>

You can contact your Homestay Coordinator at any time if you feel unsafe, have concerns, or need guidance in any situation.



RESOURCES

B.C Helpline for Children (1-800-663-9122)

May be called in cases where the international student feels he/she is being mistreated or feels unsafe in the home or at school.

Kids Help Phone (Tel:800-668-6868)

Provides counselling and mental health support

Kelty Mental Health Resource Center (<http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>)

Provides resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living.

For any other concerns, please contact your Homestay Coordinator as soon as possible.





THANK YOU

Thank you for being part of the Coquitlam College Homestay Program. Living with a host family is a chance to learn, grow, and build lasting connections. We are excited to support you on this journey and look forward to the experiences you will create.

CONTACT INFORMATION

School Address & Office Hours

Coquitlam College

2920 Virtual Way #300, Vancouver,
BC V5M 0C4

Office Hours

Monday to Thursday: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Friday: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Closed on Weekends and Public Holidays



Phone

(604) 939-6633



Homestay Email

homestay@coquitlamcollege.com