



# Tips for a Successful Homestay Experience

As you embark on your homestay experience, we want to provide you with some valuable tips to ensure a successful and enriching time with your host family.

You can watch a video summary of this information at [bit.ly/NZH-orientation](https://bit.ly/NZH-orientation)

## NZH will match you with the best host possible, but you may need to be flexible when it comes to things like:

- Travel distance to school.
  - This may be up to 1 hour by public transport.
  - The majority of our homestay families live in neighbourhoods outside the city centre.
- Suburb / town.
- Type of accommodation e.g. house vs townhouse vs apartment.
- Host demographics e.g. age, family structure, background, etc.
- Living with children.
  - Children over the age of 8 are classed as adults for student/host matching purposes.
- Pets.
  - Many New Zealand homes do have pets (dogs, cats and birds are most common).
  - They are friendly, house trained and part of the family.
  - Students can indicate if they are allergic or afraid of particular animals in their profile.
- Number of students per home.
- Nationality of other students in the home.
- When you receive your placement report.
  - These are usually sent 2 weeks before your arrival date.
  - There is a risk that a host's availability may change if booking is placed too far in advance.



## What are families in New Zealand like?

- Many different kinds of people are homestay hosts. A homestay family could be made up of:
  - Mother, father and children
  - A young couple
  - A single man or woman
  - Grandparents
  - Retired individuals
  - A single mother or father and their children
- Most hosts are aged between 35-65.



- New Zealand is a diverse, multicultural country so we have a range of people hosting with us. Our hosts come from a variety of backgrounds and have their own hobbies and interests.
- Even if a host was not born in New Zealand, they are still required to speak English in the home and to assist students with improving their English skills.
- We do not discriminate based on religious affiliation, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

## Food

- Your host family will provide you with meals based on the homestay package you have selected.
- Keep an open mind about New Zealand food and taste everything, even if the food is unfamiliar.
  - Let your host know about foods you like or would like to try.
- A complete meal will usually be provided in 1 serve.
  - The host may offer more food if it is available, however, they are not required to cater for extras.
- Remind your host of any food allergies or dietary restrictions you have as soon as you arrive.



The focus of living in a homestay is not about convenience, but about the **experience and support** students have when living in a foreign country.

## Food (continued)

### Breakfast

- Typical breakfast items include **toast, cereal, fruit and yoghurt as well as juice, tea and coffee.**
- Provided by the host and prepared by the student.
- A hot meal is not generally served, but the host may offer it on a special occasion.

### Lunch

- A typical lunch might include a **sandwich or wrap with fillings of meat, lettuce, cheese, tomato, salad, etc. with some fruit, biscuits or chips, etc.** **Leftovers** from the previous night's dinner might also be offered.
- Hosts will either pack a lunch for you or offer a selection of foods for you to pack your own.
- Lunch will not typically be a hot meal.

### Dinner

- This will be a well-balanced, dinner-sized meal which may include a standard portion of **meat or other protein like chicken, fish, eggs, etc. with vegetables or rice, pasta or noodles.**
- Dessert should be offered if others in the home are having dessert at the table.

### Fruit Bowl

- Hosts should provide up to 2 pieces of fruit per day such as **oranges, apples, bananas** and other seasonal varieties.

### Not included

- Confectionery, muesli bars, soft drinks and other snack foods. You will need to purchase these at your expense.
- Please do not help yourself to your hosts' food.
- If you require extra food or you want something specific, you need to buy it yourself.



## The Home

### Travel time

- This will depend on the city as some are bigger than others.
- The maximum travel time from your homestay to school / university will be 1 hour on public transport.

### Safety

- The home is clean, safe, secure, in good repair, compliant with building codes, and not under renovation.

### Furnished private room

- Clean, comfortable room with a bed and bedding (pillow, doona, sheets), desk, chair, lighting, and storage space.
- The room should be comfortably cool/warm depending on the season.
- Not all homes will have air conditioning and/or heaters, but if they are available, they should be used moderately and switched off overnight and when you are going out. You can ask your host for a fan to cool down or extra blankets if you are cold.
- No food or drinks in the bedroom (water is OK).
- You may be asked to help change the bedding every week.
- Please keep your room tidy and leave the room clean before you vacate homestay.

### Shared spaces and amenities

- You will have full access to common areas like the kitchen, living room, laundry and yard.
- Please ask your host if you are unsure how to use any appliances e.g. microwave, washing machine, air conditioning, sound system, etc.
- You should be prepared to do your own laundry 1-2 days a week if you are over the age of 18.
- Keeping shared spaces tidy after use and being mindful of noise (especially at night) helps create a positive living environment.



## Bathroom

- May be private or shared with the family, but the door will be lockable.
- Towels, toilet paper and cleaning products will be provided.
- Students are responsible for their own personal toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc.).
- Shower times should be limited to 10-15 minutes as water bills can be quite expensive.
- Showers should be taken at a reasonable hour - not after 10pm or before 6am unless agreed with the host.

## Utilities and internet

- Water, electricity, and gas is included in the homestay fees.
- Internet access is included as part of our homestay packages.
  - The internet is for study purposes NOT for downloading music, TV shows, movies or playing games as this may exceed the limit.



## House rules

- It's important to listen to your host parents' guidance and rules as they are essential for maintaining a respectful living environment during your stay.
- Please familiarise yourself with the student's guide to house rules, which can be found at [bit.ly/nzh-house-rules-template](https://bit.ly/nzh-house-rules-template).
- Hosts may also have their own rules, which will be discussed once you arrive.

## Bugs and wildlife

- Encountering bugs, pests and native animals around the home is common HOWEVER most are harmless and can be easily dealt with.
- Let your homestay host know if you see any insects or wildlife as they will help remove it.

## Communicating with your host family

### Speak English in the home

- Even if you are not confident with your English, don't be afraid to speak with your host family.
- Speaking English in the home is a great way to improve your language skills.
- If you don't understand something, ask your host to repeat it.
- All NZH hosts receive training and many have past homestay experiences with international students. They will be very patient and understanding.

### Effective communication

- Having clear communication with your host family helps ensure you have a great homestay experience.

### Here are some tips for effective communication:

#### *Express your needs and concerns*

- If something is bothering you or you need something specific to feel more comfortable, don't hesitate to communicate them to your host parents.

#### *Be respectful and appreciative*

- Showing respect and gratitude towards your host parents will strengthen your relationship and contribute to a positive atmosphere.

#### *Clear communication*

- When discussing your plans, preferences, or any changes to your schedule, make sure to communicate clearly and in advance.

#### *Seek guidance and support*

- Your host parents have local knowledge and experience that can greatly assist you.
- They also understand that you may feel stressed being in a new country or need some emotional support. Don't hesitate to chat with them if you have questions about your new city or are feeling unhappy.



## Getting the most out of your homestay

- Embrace the opportunity to form meaningful connections and be open to new experiences.
- Most family socialising in New Zealand happens around the dining room table, particularly at dinner time and on weekends when everybody has a chance to relax and chat about their day.
- While it is important to engage with your host family, it is equally important to respect their personal boundaries. Understand and respect their privacy and allow them their own space and time.
- New Zealand is well-known for being multicultural, and you have the chance to enjoy this diversity by staying with a host family from a different background.

### ***Be open-minded***

- Approach your experience with an open mind and a genuine curiosity about different cultures.
- Embrace the opportunity to learn and grow from your interactions.



### ***Learn about their culture***

- Take the initiative to learn about the culture, traditions and customs of your host family.
- Ask questions and show interest in their way of life.



### ***Share your culture***

- Just like you're curious about their culture, remember that your host family is also interested in learning about yours. This helps you both understand each other better

### ***Embrace Differences***

- Understand that cultural differences may lead to misunderstandings at times.
- Approach these situations with patience and a willingness to learn from them.



### ***Travel together***

- If your host family is open to it, explore New Zealand together.
- This can be an enriching experience as you discover new places and create shared memories.

### ***Try their food***

- Food is a powerful way to experience another culture.
- Don't hesitate to try traditional dishes prepared by your host family.



### ***Build relationships***

- Don't just view your host family as hosts; build genuine relationships with them.
- Share stories, experiences, and laughter to create lasting bonds.

## Student Orientation

Our student handbooks and orientation video help you prepare for your homestay experience and life in New Zealand.

**Handbook For High School / Under 18 Students:** [bit.ly/nzh-U18-student-handbook](https://bit.ly/nzh-U18-student-handbook)

**Handbook For University / Over 18 Students:** [bit.ly/nzh-student-handbook](https://bit.ly/nzh-student-handbook)

**Video:** [bit.ly/NZH-orientation](https://bit.ly/NZH-orientation)

## If you are feeling sick or need support...

Let your host know if you are feeling sick. If it is not an emergency, they can help you find a local doctor. Please take your medical insurance card with you to your appointment.

Please visit [bit.ly/nzh-student-support-services](https://bit.ly/nzh-student-support-services) to access information about health and wellbeing services in New Zealand.

## NZH Placements and Refunds

- Please read the NZH Refund Policy
- ([bit.ly/nzh-refund-policy](https://bit.ly/nzh-refund-policy)).
- NZH will match you with a host based on common interests, lifestyle factors and preferences.
  - Please be open-minded about the host family you have been matched with.
  - Requests to transfer to another homestay will only be considered with a valid reason.
  - If you are unhappy with your host family after arriving in homestay, NZH will work with the you and your host to help address any concerns.
- Once a homestay placement has commenced, NZH is unable to refund Weekly Fees for the initial period of homestay (usually 4 weeks).

The Matching Fee is also not refundable.

- An additional Matching Fee may be charged if:

### Prior to Arrival

You receive your NZH Placement Report and you request to be matched with a different host family.

### After Arrival

You wish to continue in homestay after the first 4 weeks but wants to change host families without a valid reason.

- Weekly Fees are to be paid in advance on a monthly basis after the first 4 weeks of the homestay in order to continue the placement (unless otherwise stated).
- To move out of homestay, you must provide NZH and your host with a minimum of 14 days (2 weeks) written notice. This notice cannot begin during the first 14 days (2 weeks) of homestay.

## Room Holding Policy

NZH can hold your room for you while you go on holiday.

Key conditions:

- Rate is 50% of the normal Weekly Fee.
- You must be away for 7 nights or more.
- Full Weekly Fees apply if the holiday is 6 days or less.
- You must provide NZH and your host with a minimum of 14 days (2 weeks) written notice of your holiday plans to be eligible for the reduced Fee.
- Under 18s also require prior approval from their Education Provider.
- Refer to the NZH Room Holding Policy for more information at [bit.ly/nzh-room-holding-policy](https://bit.ly/nzh-room-holding-policy).

Please take the time to read our **Student Placement Process flyer**, which has valuable information about payment requirements, student/host matching and key communication timeframes.

[bit.ly/nzh-student-placement-process](https://bit.ly/nzh-student-placement-process)

## Contact NZH

- ✉ [info@newzealandhomestay.co.nz](mailto:info@newzealandhomestay.co.nz)
- ☎ Within New Zealand: 09 884 8404
- ☎ **24/7 After Hours Emergencies**  
Within New Zealand: 09 884 8401  
International: (+64) 9 884 8401

