



Nanaimo Christian School

Belong- Believe-Achieve

Nanaimo Christian School International Student Program

Homestay Program Guide

James Sijpbeer

Nanaimo Christian School Principal

Rhonda Libbus

International Program Coordinator

Christina James

Homestay Coordinator



Nanaimo Christian School Mission Statement:



In community, NCS pursues Christ-centered educational excellence that equips students to live Biblically, act responsibly, work cooperatively, communicate effectively and achieve success in who God has called them to be.

Core Values:

1. Nanaimo Christian School is a **Christian community** – everything that we do and teach is rooted in the Christian faith and founded upon God and His Word. We desire to partner with families in the education and spiritual growth of our students.
2. Nanaimo Christian School is a **community of grace** – we go beyond just rules and consequences in order to reach the hearts of our students and inspire Christ-like transformation.
3. Nanaimo Christian School is **responsive** – we recognize the uniqueness of each student and strive to exceed expectations and provide a positive school experience for all.
4. Nanaimo Christian School is a **safe haven** – we commit to provide an environment where students are protected both physically and emotionally, and provide a loving atmosphere where they can safely grow into the person God has called them to be.
5. Nanaimo Christian School is **forward-thinking** – we value innovation and strive to discover the best practices for student learning.
6. Nanaimo Christian School is **intentional** – we lead, serve, and teach with great passion because we are confident in what God has called us to do. We work to cultivate that same passion in every one of our students.

Table of Contents

[Statement of Philosophical Foundation](#)

[Goal of the Homestay Program](#)

[Becoming a homestay family at NCS](#)

[How Students Are Placed](#)

[Family Life - What to Expect](#)

[Daily Life - What to Expect](#)

[Inside the Home](#)

[Bathroom Use](#)

[Celebrations](#)

[Chores](#)

[Church Attendance](#)

[Curfew](#)

[Damaged Property](#)

[Food](#)

[Homestay Fees and Miscellaneous Fees](#)

[Resolving Conflicts](#)

[Telephone and Internet](#)

[Outside the Home](#)

[Academic Support](#)

[Driver's Licenses and Ownership of Vehicles](#)

[Family Holiday or Travel](#)

[Medical Insurance](#)

[Outings](#)

[Restaurants](#)

[School Absences](#)

[School Trips](#)

[Transportation](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

[Final Words](#)

Goal of the Homestay Program

The goal of the Nanaimo Christian School Homestay Program is to provide a safe, supportive, English-speaking, Christian, family environment for international students attending the school. Our goal is to select homestay families who meet these criteria. Parents of international students, together with host parents, are encouraged to provide consistency between the home and school so that the vision of the school is supported and advanced.

An excellent homestay environment allows students to improve their English skills within a positive, family environment. It also gives students an opportunity to experience Canadian culture and traditions. It is our prayer that students will have a rich experience and that they will see Christ both in the family and at school.

We believe that these guidelines encourage excellent communication and understanding between homestay parents and their students. We also realize that difficulties and differences will be a part of this process and we are committed to supporting homestay families and international students with issues that may arise.

Becoming a homestay family at Nanaimo Christian School

Becoming a homestay family in the Nanaimo Christian School International Program requires the following:

- living in a way that reflects a belief in the Triune God
- completing the Homestay Application Form available from our Homestay Coordinator
- receiving an initial home inspection by the Homestay Coordinator- home must comply with BC Building Code bylaws
- submitting a current criminal record checks for all adults living in the home; the fees for this are to be paid by homestay family
- Reference checks when required
- mandatory attendance at the annual Orientation Meeting
- bi-annual home visits or interviews by the NCS International staff
- Ensure that your home and auto insurance policy (\$3-5,000,000) adequately covers students residing in your home-some policies do not cover homestay students
- Must have wifi -long term students only

Homestay families should be cautioned against depending on income from homestay fees in order to balance their family budget. The school is not obliged to place or replace a student or reimburse fees for perceived lost income.

A community care licence will be required under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (the “CCALA”) if a homestay family cares for three or more persons in his/her home. (Mandated by BC Ministry of Education 2015)

How Students Are Placed

International students are asked to complete a Homestay Application Form and write a short letter of introduction to their prospective homestay family. As much as possible, their requests are taken into consideration when the Homestay Coordinator determines placement. However, even if requested, it will not always be possible to match a student with a homestay family having children in the same age range as the student. In every case, the Homestay Coordinator will make every effort to provide the best situation for the student. Generally an International student is not placed in a homestay family where the host children are over the age of 13 and the opposite sex. There are exceptions to this, with the permission of the International Coordinator and the student’s family agrees in writing to this living arrangement.

Ordinarily, we do not place more than one student per home. Where there is an exception, students must be of the same sex and have a different first language. If a homestay family has a student placement through another agency, the Homestay Coordinator must be informed. Our Homestay Program complies with the [MOE Homestay Guidelines 2018](#)



Family Life – What to Expect

Our homestay families want to host students because they are interested in other cultures and want students to be a part of their family; the experience should not be just room and board. Host parents look out for the students' best interests and will help them stay safe and healthy, encourage them in their schoolwork, and guide them as they grow as children of God.



As a general guideline, homestay families are asked to treat their students as they would one of their children. Using this guideline helps families determine not only what they would expect of the student, but also what the student should expect of them.

Students must have their own room, which should include an adequate study area. The room should be supplied with a bed, dresser, closet, mattress, pillow, bed linens, lamp, chair, desk, and internet access. Homestay families should respect the privacy of the student's room and everyone in the household should respect each other's property.

Students and host parents will need to talk about how much time they will want to spend alone. It's important to find a good balance between respecting each other's privacy and spending too much time alone. It would be impolite and unwise for students to spend too much of their time behind closed doors writing or talking in their own language at the cost of taking part in family life, getting to know others and improving their English skills. (See Behaviour Code agreement below)

English should be spoken whenever the student is present.

Daily Life – What to Expect

Bathroom Use

Canadian bathroom routines can be very different. Some of the main differences that need to be brought to the student's attention are:

- Canadians prefer taking showers to baths
- showers are often in the morning
- bathe inside the bathtub
drain and clean the tub after use
- have no drain in the bathroom floor
- keep the bathroom floor dry
- shower once per day

Some important bathroom related things to keep in mind and discuss with your student is:



- There should be clear expectations concerning who can shower or bathe when and for how long.
- Students shouldn't be required to wait until their host parents have showered before taking their shower or bath. Leaving enough hot water for other people in the family is important.
- Showers should not be taken late in the evening if it disturbs the homestay family.
- Toilet paper, soap and towels will be provided by the homestay family. Students need to supply their own personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and moisturizing cream. The student's personal items should not be used by other members of the homestay family without permission.
- A host parent should talk to the student about what can and can't be flushed down the toilet.
- Although it might be embarrassing, a plugged toilet is something to report, not something to hide. Students should never attempt to fix problems in the bathroom.
- The bathroom should be clean and dry after every use.

Celebrations

Living in a Canadian homestay allows students to gain an understanding of Canadian celebrations and traditions. Students are encouraged to share in their homestay family and extended family's celebrations.

Chores

It is reasonable to ask the student, as a member of the family, to clean and vacuum his/her room as well as clean the bathroom after using it. In addition, it is reasonable to ask students to assist with small daily chores like:

- setting or clearing the table
- washing dishes or tidying the kitchen
- taking out the garbage or recycling
- picking up personal items and keeping them in the bedroom
- doing their personal laundry
- making their own breakfast and lunch

It is not reasonable to expect students to help with

- babysitting
- doing heavy cleaning or garden work
- cooking meals (unless they offer to do so)



Church Attendance

Students are expected to attend church with their homestay family regularly. It's also great to encourage them (but not require them) to become involved in youth group activities. There may be times when a student wants to attend an ethnic church. Although this is

acceptable, it should not take the place of regular attendance at the homestay family's church.

Curfew

Curfews are dependent on age and at the discretion of the homestay family. It's important that both the student and the host parents negotiate reasonable expectations in this area.

Normally, evenings are meant for studying, spending time with the homestay family or participating in school, church or community events.

Bedtime is exactly that – time for bed and time to sleep. Bedtime does not mean time to use devices for gaming or connecting with family and friends.



Damaged Property

Host parents should review their home insurance policy with respect to liability and coverage.

In the process of normal living, household accidents may occur that do damage to household property. If a homestay student is involved in a household accident that is deemed to be an accident, but results in property damage, then the following should be considered:

- What would you charge your own child – the entire amount, the insurance deductible, or some amount in-between or lower?
- If the damage is a result of negligent or destructive behavior, the student may be expected to pay the deductible up to \$900.00.
- The homestay family will not be held responsible for loss of property or physical harm incurred except in the case where Canadian Law has been breached.
- The homestay family will not hold the employees and board of the school responsible for any inconvenience or property damage, or physical harm incurred and received by the student.



Food

The homestay family is expected to provide three meals a day, as well as snacks. Typical meals may include:

- Breakfast: usually a light, quick meal: bread with jam, honey or peanut butter; muffins; cereal with milk; fruit; yogurt. Sometimes, often on weekends or holidays, homestay families may prepare larger breakfasts of eggs, bacon, pancakes or waffles.
- Lunch: Canadian students often prepare their own lunches. This may include a sandwich, bun or bagel with meat or cheese, fruit, yogurt, raw vegetables, and cookies.
- Supper: usually some combination of any of the following foods – soup, meat, cooked vegetables, salad, and rice, pasta or potatoes.

Further Thoughts about Food:

- It is recommended that homestay families take their students grocery shopping in order to learn their likes and dislikes. Homestay families may invite their student to share their culture by preparing a meal or dish for their family.
- Students should not be permitted to eat meals in their bedroom. Be sure that it is clear where food may or may not be eaten.
- Students may want to buy their own snacks. Discuss where they should store their food.
- Students are encouraged to be honest about the amount of food they receive, and host parents are wise to ask whether the student has had enough. In Canada, it is very acceptable to have second helpings.
- Students should be adventurous about trying unfamiliar foods. However, homestay families should not insist that students eat food they dislike.
- Students are expected to be at home in the evenings to eat with their homestay families. If the student is going to be away, a reasonable notice should be given to the homestay family. Be sure that everyone understands what reasonable is.
- Encourage your student to share their favourite recipes from their home country.

Further Thoughts about Code of Conduct:

When International Students come to NCS he/she signs a Behaviour Code of Conduct. Please familiarize yourself with NCS's expectations.

Behaviour Code Agreement (Taken from Application package)

Each student is held accountable for their actions and high moral standards are required. All students must agree to the rules outlined in the Nanaimo Christian School Student Handbook which will be given to each student when they arrive at NCS. Students as well as parents are required to sign these rules once accepted to Nanaimo Christian School.

The rules of the Handbook include, but are not limited to:

General Rules

- no drinking alcoholic beverages*
- no consumption of marijuana or recreational drugs*
- no using tobacco (smoking, chewing or e cigarettes)*
- no premarital sexual relations*
- no use of profanity*
- no weapons on school ground*
- no cheating or plagiarism*
- no sleeping in class*
- students must abide to the school dress code as outlined in the Handbook*
- students must agree to the attendance policy in the Handbook*
- homework needs to be completed to the best of your ability and handed in on time*
- students must agree to obtain permission from parents in order to travel in Canada without the homestay family. An adult of 25 years of age or older must accompany students under the age of 18*
- students must be culturally sensitive and respectful to students from other countries and students from their own country*
- students must attempt to speak English during the classes with their peers*
- students must participate in all mandatory school activities and expectations*

Please refer to the [Homestay Guide for Students](#) and the [NCS International Student Handbook](#) for student expectations.

Homestay Fees and Miscellaneous Fees

Unless other arrangements have been made, a monthly homestay cheque of \$900.00 will be mailed to the homestay for the beginning of each month or direct deposit to your account. Please make sure that the Homestay Coordinator has your correct mailing address or banking information. The monthly fee enables homestay families to recover the costs of housing and feeding an additional person. No prepaid lump sum payments are permitted. Homestay parents may not charge students for additional expenses unless the Homestay Coordinator has been notified and agrees to the expense.

Fees recognize the cost of:

- food
- daily transportation to school, including school events and early morning or after school classes
- utilities
- preparing a comfortable bedroom that meets requirements

If a student leaves the homestay for more than 5 consecutive nights, the \$30.00 per night homestay rate is reduced to \$15 per night. If the student returns to their home country during the summer, they can pack up their belongings and clean their room so that the homestay can use their room. The homestay family will find a location where the student can store these belongings. In this scenario, the student will *not* be expected to pay the reduced rate. If the student insists that their room be left “as is”, and this is agreeable to the homestay family, the student will be required to pay the \$15 per night rate for the duration of the summer.

Storage and Moving Fees- If students need to store belongings over the summer months, a storage fee of \$50 per month will apply. If Homestay families help in the moving of student supplies, a mileage fee of \$.45 per km and \$25 per hour for packing and moving of student supplies will apply.

If a student returns more than 1 night prior to the beginning of a pay period, the Homestay family will be paid at the rate of \$35 per night up to 2 weeks. If students require more than 14 nights before the beginning of a pay period, the daily rate will be \$30.00 per night.

Homestay families may not charge any additional fees other than those outlined above. If requests are made for things beyond the scope of the homestay family responsibilities, please check with the International Program Coordinator regarding appropriate charges. Students can be asked to pay for activities, lessons and camps, if his/her parents are in agreement.

Resolving Conflicts

Living with others can present problems. Problems and conflicts happen in all families and can be solved when everyone commits to understanding each other's expectations and needs. Communication is key to sorting out misunderstandings whether caused by cultural differences, communication difficulties, or other conflicting personal traits.

In most cases, if you have a problem or a misunderstanding with one another, you should:

- tell each other about how you feel
- tell each other what you need
- encourage each other to express their feelings and needs
- use questions and verification techniques to facilitate communication

Problems of a more sensitive nature should be communicated to the Homestay Coordinator and/or International Coordinator.

Re-placing students is not the first response when problems arise between homestay families and international students. The Homestay Coordinator or the International Program Coordinator will always insist that homestay families and students engage in open and honest conversation. A facilitated meeting may be arranged so that issues can be discussed. It is only when conflicts appear unresolvable that students will be placed in a new home.

If conflicts arise between a student and members of the homestay family and the situation is deemed unresolvable by the agreement of the Homestay and International Coordinator, a student will be allowed to change homestay. A minimum notice of two weeks is required. Normally, if a student requests a homestay re-placement, the student will be charged \$200.00

Telephone and Internet

We live in a digital age. At Nanaimo Christian School, we try to teach students how to be responsible with their digital devices. International students are required to follow the guidelines their homestay family has in place regarding the use of the internet. It is recommended that a time in the evening is set when all digital devices are turned off. It is reasonable that students would be required to bring all devices to a designated spot or at an arranged time. The following suggestions should be discussed with your student:

- devices (laptops, phones tablets etc) need to be at a designated place by 9:30pm
- It is not appropriate to have devices/electronics at the dinner table.



- Plan on doing a family activity with your homestay family after dinner–No electronics
- Limit screen time (not including homework) to less than 2 hours per night
- Encourage students to integrate with their Canadian family instead of being in constant communication with his/her family. A suggested time of 30-45 minutes to day is recommended.
- If student’s technology usage is a concern, please contact the Homestay Coordinator and/or International Coordinator for additional support.

Outside the Home

Academic Support

Academic standards at Nanaimo Christian School are high and, as a result, students will require help at home with assignments from time to time. International Program coordinators and staff are in constant communication with students’ teachers and will decide, based on student marks, attitude and ability, if additional tutoring outside of school time would be beneficial. Additional adult tutoring may be arranged at an additional cost to the student. Staff will work with homestay families to find times and places that are convenient for all.



Community service and daily physical activity is a requirement for graduation and may require parental support.

Many outings that students partake in outside of the school require parents to give their consent.

Driver’s Licenses and Ownership of Vehicles

While in the Nanaimo Christian School homestay program, international students are only permitted to get their driver’s license and drive a vehicle with the permission of the parents, custodian, the host parents and the International Program Coordinator. It is advisable that students take a formal driver’s training course.

Family Holidays or Travel

If a homestay family wants to include their student in a family holiday they should get permission from the student’s parents and International Coordinator. Clear expectations about who pays the student’s travel expenses should be communicated to the student’s parents. If a decision is made not to include the student in the activity, it is the responsibility of the homestay family to make alternate arrangements



that are acceptable to everyone. Homestay families are expected to remunerate substitute families at the rate of \$30 per night.

The International Program Coordinator must be informed about all alternate arrangements.

If you plan to travel to the USA, please ensure that you have an appropriate travel visa. Under normal circumstances, Guard Me Medical Insurance will cover students outside of Canada. Please call to inform the company of travel plans.

Medical Insurance

All international students at NCS are enrolled in the BC Medical Service Plan called MSP. There is a wait period of 4 months to receive MSP and in the meantime all students receive medical insurance through Guard Me. You will be provided with a medical card number to be used if your student needs to see a doctor. Students are encouraged to use [Mobile Doctor through Guard Me](#) for non-urgent issues.

Students/homestay families may need to pay up front and then submit receipts to Guard Me. For support, please see the International Coordinator.

If your student requires costly emergency medical attention, it is advised to contact Guard Me for advice at 1-877-873-8447 or after hours at 1-905-731-8291.

Emotional Support

Due to being away from home and navigating an unfamiliar culture, International Students can often be under a lot of stress, thereby experiencing anxiety and/or depression. Homestay families are required to report to the school immediately if they hear language/ phrases/ topics that might be concerning a student's mental health or life. In addition, if the student is taking mood altering drugs like anti-depression or anti-anxiety medication, this must be reported to the school.

Students experiencing mental health difficulties are encouraged to seek help from the school's counsellors. Guard Me also provides 8 free sessions with a certified counselor which can be used during their 4 months with the Guard Me insurance plan. After this time, then can continue counseling services but may have to pay on their own for this. Nanaimo works with the following Guard Me counselor:

Lei Chen Counseling

5973 Waterdon Drive
Nanaimo, V9T 6A9, **Phone:** 250-797-9735

In addition, please note the following resources:



BC Helpline for Children (1-800-663-9122)- May be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected. There is a legal duty to report your concern to the child welfare worker.

Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868)- Counselling and mental health support

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre (keltymentalhealth.ca)- Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living.

Vancouver Island Crisis Line (1-888-494-3888) Available 24/7. They also have a text option (250-800-3806) and a Crisis Chat Room available seven days a week, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm (<https://www.viccrisis.ca>)

Outings

International students must inform their host families when making plans to go out on a free day or afternoon. The student must make sure the host family knows where he/she is at all times. If a student is staying overnight at a friend or family's place, the host family needs to have the name, address and phone number of the friend's parents. A host family may refuse permission for their student to participate in some activities. Reasons for their refusal could include concern for safety, conflict with family plans, or the amount of homework a student has.

If students choose to visit a nearby city on the weekend, they are required to obtain permission from their host families, parents, and notify the International Program Coordinator and meet the following requirements:

- Provide all contact information of where they will be going, how long they are planning to be away, who they will be travelling with, what they are planning on doing while they are away, and what mode of transportation they will be using to get to and from their destination. This information must be provided to the International Program Coordinator. **Students are not permitted to travel until the International Program Coordinator has approved the request.**
- Stay with a relative or another responsible adult over the age of 25. Students are not permitted to stay in hotels or to stay in homes with students of the opposite gender.
- Carry a cell phone and emergency contact numbers in case of problems.

All school policies must be adhered to. Drinking, drug use, and any other illegal or immoral activity is absolutely prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion. Incomplete school work or a poor work ethic school could be reasons for denying a request for going on an outing.



Direct permission from the student's parents is required if students go on a non-school trip in which they:

- stay away for the night without the homestay family

In these cases, the school will:

- arrange for a phone call to the parents.
- require a letter from the parents authorizing their child to travel under these circumstances.

Restaurants

Homestay families may enjoy dining out from time to time. If this replaces a regular mealtime, the homestay family should include the student and pay for the meal. In a special circumstance where a homestay family may be unable to invite the student to join a restaurant meal or pay for it, it is critical to clearly communicate with the student about the reason why. In these cases, there must be an option for the student to remain at home and have a prepared meal provided.



School Absences

If sick, students must have permission from their host parent to be absent from school. Host parents must notify the school office when the student is ill.

Students should not miss school for vacations. When booking flights home for holidays, students should refer to the school calendar to avoid missing instructional days and arrive in Canada no later than two days prior to the start date of school.

School Trips

With the exception of meal expenses, host families are not expected to cover the costs of school trips.

Waivers will be sent for all field trips. The custodian, parents or the International Coordinator may sign waivers depending on the prearranged agreement.

Transportation

Homestay families will ensure that students have transportation to and from school. It is reasonable



to expect students to walk to school if the home is two kilometres or less from school.

If the student needs to take the city or school bus to school, the homestay family is responsible for arranging and paying for the bus pass.

Homestay families should be available to drive students to activities at the school, church or in the community. It is important to make polite requests in a reasonable amount of time. (An additional driving fee may be requested with approval of NCS. See above) Except in emergency situations, homestay families should not expect their students to take a taxi.

It is reasonable for students to expect their homestay family to drive them to and pick them up from the airport, ferry or bus terminal. IT is reasonable for students to expect their homestay family to drive for one extra curricular activity up to three times per week. Homestay families are encouraged to think about “What would you do for your own children?”

Miscellaneous

Students may not make significant purchases without the permission of the homestay family, the Homestay Coordinator and/or the International Program Coordinator. The International Program Coordinator reserves the right to decline permission to make the requested purchase.

Homestay families are expected to cover costs incurred as a result of students being involved in a regular family activity (for example, going to a movie). The homestay family is not expected to pay similar costs when the student goes out with friends.

Homestay families must inform the Homestay Coordinator of all residents and pets in the household. Please notify the Homestay Coordinator of all changes to the household.

If students invite guests to their homestay, it should be done with the knowledge and permission of the homestay family.

If students continue to disobey the homestay guidelines despite conflict resolution attempts, the student may be asked by the school to withdraw from our school program. Please contact the Homestay Coordinator and/or the International Coordinator.

Final Words

The way to make the most of the homestay experience is for everyone to come with an open mind and understanding heart. Students should come prepared to participate in family life and share in the responsibilities of being a family member. Homestay families should be ready to welcome their student into the family and encourage them to be

involved in the life of the family. Mutual understanding, sensitivity and trust will go a long way to ensuring a positive experience for everyone.