



Golden Hills International Homestay FAQs



Why would my family want to host a student?

Families host students for a number of reasons, but the most common reason is to learn about a different culture.

What countries do the students come from?

Students come from around the world to attend school in the Golden Hills School Division (GHSD) and each year varies as to the specific countries. Some of the countries that we frequently have students from include Korea, Hong Kong, China, Thailand, Japan, Nigeria, Germany, Brazil, and Mexico.

Can students speak English when they arrive?

All of our students have studied English before they arrive in the Golden Hills School Division, but the level of skill does vary. Skills improve the more students practice speaking.

What age are the students?

Most of our students are attending junior high or high school. We do occasionally have some younger students in elementary school. Some of our high school students may be as old as 20 years of age; it sometimes takes international students longer to complete the Alberta High School Diploma requirements, as they are learning English while taking their regular courses.

How many students can we have in our home?

Most families have one or two students. Each home is looked at on an individual basis to determine the number of students that can live in the home.

Will we be the legal guardian for the student?

Joann Natalini of our International office is the custodian for all of our international students under the age of 18. As custodian, Joann arranges for the direct care and support of the students, in place of their parents, in the event of an emergency. She also has authority to sign some forms. The student's parents remain their legal guardians.

Homestay parents are not to co-sign contracts or agreements, such as cell phone contracts, on behalf of their students. They also cannot sign immunization or FOIP forms. These must be sent to the students' legal guardians for signatures.

What do I do if my student is sick?

You are to treat your student as you would your own child. If the school calls to say the student needs to come home, you are responsible for picking them up.

If your student needs medical attention, you are responsible for arranging it. All students have medical insurance that covers doctor clinic visits, trips to the ER, emergency dental procedures, emergency eye care, and most prescriptions.

What are the rules about alcohol and drugs?

International students are required to obey all Canadian laws while they are in our program. If you suspect your student is using alcohol or drugs, please contact the Accommodations Coordinator immediately.

Please be aware: international students, even if they are over the legal age, are **not** to drink alcohol while they are in our program. Students and their parents sign an agreement to this as part of the application.

Are students allowed to drive?

With written permission from their parents, students can obtain an Alberta Learners Permit and participate in Drivers Education Training; however they cannot drive outside of the driving course. Students are not allowed to obtain their Driver's License.

Students are also not allowed to ride in cars or on motorbikes with other students or adults outside of their homestay family or GHSD staff, without written permission from their legal guardians.

Concessions are made if riding with another homestay parent.

Are we expected to cover the cost of the students' expenses while they are in our home?

Homestay families are paid \$650 per month per student to cover the increased costs of having an additional family member in your home. This money is not taxable, as it is not income and is to be used to cover costs such as food, utilities, local transportation, and family activities.

Students are expected to pay for their own school activities, social activities with friends, and personal items.

Some examples are: if you, as the parent, decide that the whole family is going to go out for dinner and a movie, then you would be expected to pay for the cost of your student's meal and ticket as this is a family activity. If your student asks you to drop him off at the theatre to meet friends, you are responsible to provide transportation, but not the cost of the movie ticket.

If you are taking your student on an activity, such as, skiing or snowboarding, or another event that has a larger expense, most of the students are prepared to pay for the costs, such as the rental of equipment or lift tickets. These costs should be discussed with the student beforehand.

Can I take my student on family trips or vacations?

International students' parents sign a waiver as part of the application which gives their child permission to travel in Alberta with their homestay family or staff of GHSD. If your trip is going to be overnight or out of province, you must contact the Accommodations Coordinator, so that appropriate authorization can be obtained.

Many of our host families include their students on family vacations. If the family is driving, your student should not be expected to pay for gas, as there is no additional cost to your family. If your family is flying somewhere and going to an amusement park, then your student can be expected to pay these additional costs. All costs should be discussed beforehand with the student and provided to the Accommodations Coordinator, so that the student's parents can be contacted and permission is received.

What if we are going on vacation and we can't take our student?

Please contact the Accommodations Coordinator for assistance with arranging for temporary accommodations for your student.

Depending on the situation, you may be able to have your student stay with a family member or have a family member stay in your home with the student, they may be able to stay with another homestay family or, in some cases, he may be able to stay at the dorm if a room is available.

A student is not allowed to stay in a home on his own without adult supervision. Exceptions may be made if GHSD is able to get signed permission from the student's parents.