



HOMESTAY STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026

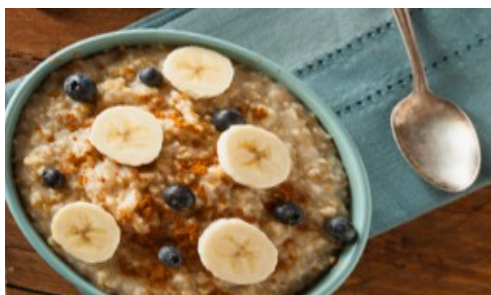
CANADIAN FAMILIES:

- Canada is a multicultural country. Your homestay family might be from another country or speak another language, but they are still a Canadian family. The purpose of Homestay is not to teach you perfect English, but to give you the experience of living with a Canadian family.
- There are many differences between your family and your homestay family. These differences are part of your Canadian experience.
- Communicate with your homestay family. This is the best way to practice your English and get to know them.



FOOD:

- Breakfast and lunch may be self-serve. In rare cases, host families may make this for their student, but others may provide their student with the food and ask them to make their own. Either is acceptable.
- Dinner should be a sit-down meal with your host family. This meal will be prepared by your host family. If your host father or mother is making dinner, you may want to offer to help. It is polite and you can practice your English.
- **Please call your host family if you are going to be late or will not be home for dinner.**
- Go food shopping with your host family. You can show them what foods you like to eat.
- If there are any questions or concerns you have about the food, please communicate with your host family about the issue or see the Accommodations Manager. We are happy to help, and there is often an easy compromise.



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TELEPHONE:

- Local phone calls from one home landline phone in Victoria to another phone in Victoria are free. Some families may only have mobile phones and no landline phones.
- Please connect your mobile phone to your family's Wi-Fi and confirm with them the rules for internet use.

HOUSE HOLD CHORES:

- Canadian families do not have maids or cleaning services. In Canada, each family member is expected to help with keeping the home clean.
- **You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself. This is not a chore – it is common respect to your host family.** You are expected to clean and tidy your room and bathroom at least once a week.
- Discuss with your homestay family how laundry is done in their home.
- It is common courtesy to help your homestay family with chores such as washing the dishes, setting the table, and clearing the table.



SMOKING/VAPING:

- Smoking is not permitted inside your homestay.
- Smoking or vaping of any kind is not permitted by students under age 19 at any time.
- Generally, host families prefer to live in a smoke-free environment.
- At school, please ask a staff member where you are allowed to smoke or vape outside.

SHOWER:

- Discuss with your host family how showers work in their home.
- Please take a shower for only 10-15 minutes once a day.
- Please clean the bathroom after yourself. Wipe up any water and/or hair on the floor and counter.

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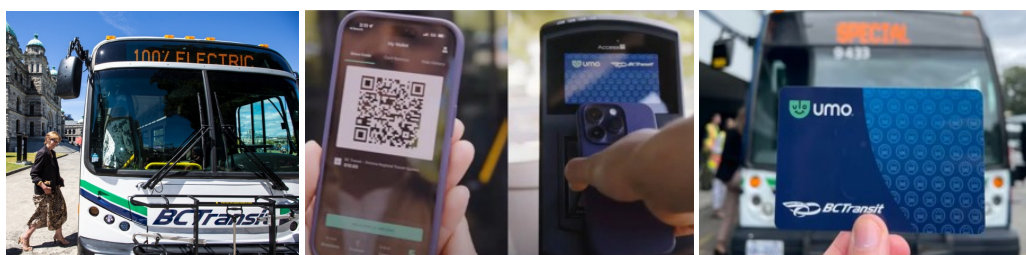
RECYCLING:

- In Canada, recycling is very important. Please talk to your family about items that recyclable. We usually separate paper, glass, and cans and place them in separate blue containers, organic/compost materials in green containers and garbage in black containers. The colors, however, may vary. You can use a garbage bin in the absence of a compost bin.



TRANSPORTATION:

- Your host family will show you how to use the bus to come to school and how to get home.
- In Victoria, B.C., transportation uses UMO Mobility. You can download the app on your mobile phone, or obtain a physical UMO card at Victoria City Hall on Centennial Square.
- You can charge an UMO Card or UMO Mobility app with any amount of money, or you can buy a 30-day pass. If you need to find out more about bus routes, UMO or UMO card locations, please visit www.bctransit.com.
- The weather is usually mild in Victoria, but from October through March, it can be rainy. Please bring appropriate clothing.



SAFETY:

Victoria is safer than many places in North America; however, you still need to be careful.

- Do not give your phone number or address to strangers.
- Do not get into a car with a stranger.
- If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.
- Talk to your host family and to your school about any strange people or activities.

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- Remember, all city buses are part of the emergency network in Victoria. Use them if you ever sense danger!
- **In case of a real emergency, please call 9-1-1 for the ambulance, police, or fire department.**

Are you thinking of moving out on your own or into a share house? Here are some tips to remember...

- Always ask for a receipt for any money exchanged when renting a room, apartment or suite.
- When visiting a share house or apartment, try to take a friend with you. It is safe and they can help you decide.



HOMESTAY CHANGES, CANCELLATIONS, REFUNDS:

- If you need to extend, cancel, or change your homestay, you **must let us know 4 (four) weeks before the date. Move requests will be subject to a \$50 change fee, unless the move is at the request of the school or the host.**
- If you have a problem with your homestay, please speak to the Homestay Team. We will be happy to help you.
- Being in a different country with different language and food can sometimes be difficult. **All conversations with the Homestay Team are confidential.**

HOMESTAY VACATIONS:

- If a host family must be away from home for a night or more, the host family will arrange for a responsible adult (age 25+, non-student) to cook, socialize and perform as a “Host” during their absence.
- For students in homestay, a student can take up to 4 (four) weeks of vacation at a time. If they decide to take 1 (one) or 2 (two) weeks of vacation, the payment made to host families will be the full weekly amount. For vacations of 3 (three) to 4 (four) weeks, payment will be half of the weekly amount for the full vacation duration.

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- Students must give the host and school 3 (three) weeks' notice before leaving on vacation. If the notice period is not respected, the amount paid will be the full homestay weekly amount.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

Both the host family and student are encouraged to work through issues directly together. This is one of the important challenges presented by the homestay experience. Should those issues not be resolved satisfactorily, both parties should speak to a Global Village staff member. Global Village staff will endeavor to resolve the issue by encouraging the student and host family to discuss the issue. If it is not resolved, Global Village staff will speak to both parties and try to reach a resolution. If there is still no resolution, Global Village staff will take any further action required.

If students have concerns with respect to the Global Village homestay department and are unable to resolve them at the school level, they may refer the matter to Languages Canada.

Below is the copy of the Homestay Agreement which you will sign together with your host family.

HOMESTAY AGREEMENT

Mission Statement & Commitment to Community

To welcome and inspire language learners from around the world through high-quality English training, assessments, activities, accommodation, campus facilities, and support services.

Statement of Diversity and Community Commitment

I agree to treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age. I support Global Village's mission to provide all students with a positive and inspiring environment free from discrimination or bias, and as a host, will strive to do the same.

1) Mutual Respect & Understanding

- Both the student and host family acknowledge that Canadian culture, customs, food and family life may be different than in other countries. Students and hosts must try their best to try new things and be open to new experiences without any judgment. Students and host families are encouraged to learn from each other and not judge each other based on appearance, accent, gender, language ability or cultural background.
- Canada is a country that prides itself on multiculturalism. Host family and students will show consideration and tolerance towards each other, as well as sensitivity to cultural differences and varying levels of English proficiency.
- The host family must treat the student as a guest in the home. The student must behave as a guest in the home and will follow the host family guidelines (rules) in the home.
- In case of a failure to follow homestay policies, serious breach of trust, or continued unacceptable behavior, Global Village English Victoria Inc. reserves the right and has sole discretion to remove any student from the homestay program.

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2) English in the Homestay

- a) The host family and student acknowledge that one of the many benefits a language student gains from Homestay is the exposure to the natural use of English in a non-classroom environment. For this reason, all GV host families must agree to speak English in the presence of their Homestay students, even if the family speaks another language as well.
- b) While we aim to avoid placing more than one student in the same home who speaks the same language, it may be unavoidable. In these cases, we require students to speak only English while in the Homestay.

3) Orienting a New Student

- a) Host should show students where to purchase a bus pass and orient the student to the neighborhood. Please show your student both how to get to GV and how to go home.
- b) Hosts and students should discuss how everyone living in the home prefers to be addressed. Students should also be introduced to any extended family members, neighbors and/or close friends.
- c) Hosts must provide all emergency numbers and contact information in a place visible to student. It is important for students and hosts to exchange contact information and discuss the best ways to reach one another. Lines of communication should remain open at all times.
- d) Hosts and students must discuss household routines—please cover bathroom times, meal times, quiet times, etc.
- e) The host family must explain student responsibilities; please cover telephone and computer use, illegal downloading, and streaming.
- f) The host family must provide the student with either keys or a code to the home. Please ensure that the student knows how to use any security systems that may be in place.

See *Handbook for Host Families 2026* for more on orientating a new student, pages 5-9.

4) Student Rooms

- a) Each student must be provided with a private room, unless specifically requested by the student or GV Victoria. GV Victoria does offer shared room options to students but hosts will be made aware of such special requests at the time of booking.
- b) The host will provide a student room with all basic furnishings required to create a comfortable environment which is conducive to studying. Furnishings shall include a proper door, bed, bed linens, closet (or adequate storage), dresser, desk, chair, ceiling light, reading lamp, curtains or blinds, etc.
- c) The student will respect the property of the host family, including all items in the student room as well as in the common areas of the home. If the student damages or breaks anything in the home, hosts must inform GV immediately. GV will review the situation and will inform both parties of the resolution. GV may request a formal quote when conducting the review.
- d) GV encourages hosts to inquire with their home insurance provider about additional coverage.

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- e) The student is required to keep their own bedroom and bathroom clean and tidy. Once per week, the student will vacuum and clean their own room, and will tidy the student bathroom.
- f) The host must respect the property of the student, including all items in the student's room as well as in the common areas of the home. Hosts must always knock on the student's door and ask permission to enter.

5) Food, Drinks & Snacks

- a) Unless the student is registered under the Self-Catering option, hosts must provide either two (2) or three (3) healthy, well-portioned meals per day, every day of the week; these should include fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, grains, milk (or alternative) and meat (or alternative). Some meals (typically breakfast and lunch for full board students, and breakfast for half board students) may be self-serve from time to time, but the evening meal should be prepared by the host and shared together with the student(s).

See Canada Food Guide for more on recommended daily servings:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/basics-base/quantit-eng.php>

- b) Breakfast should include a variety of options, ranging from toast, coffee/juice, cereal, or eggs on weekday mornings, to bacon and eggs, pancakes and other brunch-style options on weekends.
- c) If the student requested full board, lunch should be a bagged lunch on school days (leftovers or sandwiches, juice, fruit, vegetables, and snack) and a fresh-prepared meal on holidays and weekends.
- d) Dinner selections may vary depending on each host family's culture and the occasion, but should be healthy, balanced, and a well-sized portion.

Host and student must discuss dinner time. The student is responsible for informing the host family when making plans—especially when they won't be home for dinner.

- e) Missed meals:
If a host family will not be home for a dinner or the student will arrive home late from school, the evening meal shall be prepared and left in the fridge, so the student may reheat it at a convenient time.

6) Computers & Internet

- a) The host shall provide the student with 24-hour access to wireless internet service for homework or communication purposes, which may connect to the student's personal laptop or other mobile device.
- b) When selecting an internet service provider for the home, hosts shall choose a plan that suits the number of intended users; if hosting one student, the internet service should be suitable for host family members + 1 additional user. If hosting two students, the internet service should be suitable for host family members + 2 additional users. Consider an unlimited plan, if possible, as this provides the best coverage for your family and the student.
- c) Hosts shall notify students of any bandwidth restrictions. Students should be respectful of bandwidth restrictions, by limiting gaming or streaming of movies and TV. If internet usage exceeds bandwidth restrictions, hosts may notify the student and the school, but may not charge students extra for the overuse.

- d) Students must not download malicious files or inappropriate content via their host's internet service.
- e) Students must not download any illegal content, i.e., downloading illegal movies or music.

7) Drug & Alcohol Policy

- a) Students must respect their host's house rules around tobacco, cannabis, e-cigarettes and vaping devices, to maintain a healthy and smoke free environment. Unless otherwise specified, neither students nor hosts will smoke inside the home.
- b) Hosts will be asked to disclose whether or not they consume or grow cannabis the same way GV asks about tobacco use. We do this to avoid surprises. GV Victoria will not discriminate against hosts for consuming or growing cannabis – in accordance with BC laws.
- c) GV Victoria will only disclose cannabis use to agents, students, or natural parents on a host profile if a host smokes cannabis in the home (in the same way we currently disclose tobacco smoking).
- d) We ask that hosts are sensitive to the concerns and assumptions that exist around cannabis. Students and hosts should take time to educate themselves about the perceptions of cannabis around the world, to better understand each other's cultural contexts. Many students and hosts might come from personal or cultural contexts which are not accepting of its use.

8) Other Guidelines

- a) The student shall respect and guard the security and privacy of the host family's home. The student is expected to return the key prior to moving out of the host residence.
- b) The student is expected to take part in activities with the host family. The host family will show the student some places of interest in Victoria during the first two weeks of the student's stay and continue to include the student in the family's activities for the duration of their stay (i.e. inclusion in family dinners, especially at times like Thanksgiving and Christmas). If the activities are of significant cost, the student may be responsible for paying for themselves.
- c) Students and hosts should discuss household shower and bathing schedules, especially when several adults will be sharing the washroom. Some students prefer morning or evening showers or baths. Please make the arrangement that will work for both the student and the family members at a reasonable time of day (i.e. not when the rest of the household is sleeping). To conserve water, showers should be taken for a maximum of 10-15 minutes.
- d) Students and hosts should discuss the household laundry routine, the appropriate use of machines, the location of drying rack for hang-dry items, etc. If the student is doing their own laundry, it should be done once per week as Canadian laundry machines are too large for daily loads. Keep in mind laundry systems are different around the world, so you should explain your expectations to your student.
- e) The student is not contracted or expected to do household chores. The host family will not require the student to do housework apart from keeping their own room and bathroom clean and tidy. Taking one's dishes from the table to the sink is not considered a "chore"; it is customary to do this in Canada and all students are encouraged to offer to assist with dishes as a show of respect towards the host.

- f) The student should ask to use household appliances, such as stove, dishwasher, microwave, blender, espresso maker, etc. The host shall provide a safety orientation on the use of such appliances only if permission is granted to use such appliances.
- g) Quiet hours: We will encourage students to keep quiet hours between 10pm – 8am. If hours work differently in your household, please make sure to communicate it with the student directly.

9) Criminal Background Check

- a) A criminal record check is required for everyone living in the home that is 19 years and older.
- b) The host family is responsible to bear all costs associated with the criminal record checks.

10) Vacation Policy & Host Absences

- a) The host family must notify GV Victoria with 4 (four) weeks or more notice prior to any upcoming vacations, moves or absences if these occasions conflict with hosting student(s).
- b) When hosting underage students, at least one adult member of the host family must be at home every night of the homestay period. If such a situation cannot be guaranteed, the Homestay department must be notified prior to the family being away and the next point (c) shall be followed.
- c) Pertaining to the point above (b), on the rare occasion that a host family must be away from home, the host family must arrange for a responsible adult (age 25+, non-student) to cook, socialize and perform as a “Host” during their absence. The contact information, police record check and signed Declaration of Suitability for the alternate host will be provided to GV Victoria prior to family’s absence.
- d) Regarding student vacations, a student can take up to 4 (four) weeks of vacation at a time. If they decide to take 1 (one) or 2 (two) weeks of vacation, the payment made to host families will be the full weekly amount. For vacations of 3 (three) to 4 (four) weeks, payment will be half of the weekly amount for the full vacation duration. Students must give the host and school 3 (three) weeks’ notice before leaving on vacation. If the notice period is not respected, the amount paid will be the usual full homestay weekly amount.

11) Counseling and Conflict Resolution:

- a) Both parties (student and host family) acknowledge that from time to time, through no fault, differences may arise between the student and the host family. These may arise for a variety of reasons including personality mismatch, culture shock or a gap in expectations. If this should occur, the student may be moved at their request or the request of the host family and at the discretion of GV Victoria.
- b) If difficulties arise between the student and the host family, both the host family and student are encouraged to communicate directly about the issues. This is one of the important challenges and learning opportunities presented by the homestay experience.
- c) Whenever possible, a two-way verbal discussion of the issues is recommended. However, a kindly-worded letter, card, or email may also be appropriate to initiate a sensitive discussion or allow for clarity when language barriers exist.
- d) If the issue(s) cannot be resolved after the first discussion, both parties (host and student) should contact the GV Homestay department immediately so that the Team’s advice can be

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integrated into the next stage of the discussion. The Homestay Team will approach any situation in a non-judgmental and unbiased way, at the same time, respecting and observing the privacy, trust and confidentiality of each individual.

- e) Do not wait until the issue has grown bigger or has extended more than 2 or 3 days. The Homestay Team wants to help as quickly as possible.
- f) Global Village staff will endeavor to resolve the issue by encouraging the student and family to explore each other's perspectives and to learn from the experiences of others. Quite often, a student or host feels as if they are experiencing an issue for the first time in their life; however, with the volume of students and hosts involved with the Homestay Program, the Homestay Team has often seen or heard of similar situations and can offer advice based on what has worked for others.
- g) After the student and host have spoken for the second time, if the issue is still not resolved, Global Village staff will seek permission to share with the other party what a student or host has disclosed in the interests of opening up the conversation further. At no time will the Homestay Team break the confidentiality of either party (host or student) without permission.
- h) In the case of an issue which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both the student and host family, Global Village staff will take further action as seen fit.
- i) A student may be moved from a Homestay as a result of the behavior (on the part of student or host) that GV Victoria in its complete discretion considers unacceptable or dangerous. Such conditions could include but are not limited to abuse of drugs or alcohol, aggressive or abusive behavior, or violating other accepted norms of conduct within a homestay.
- j) If students have concerns with respect to Global Village Homestay and are unable to clarify these concerns at the school level, they may refer the matter to Languages Canada (LC). Please note that LC serves students but not host families.

LC Resolution Procedure:

- *Languages Canada reviews the observation of the Standards within Language Programs on an annual basis.*
- *The first line of communication for students with respect to concerns is with the program.*
- *The role of Languages Canada is to act as an advocate on behalf of the student and to ensure that full information is available to review the matter with both the student and Member School.*
- *Should a resolution not be possible, the matter is referred to the Board of Directors of Languages Canada for resolution in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Dispute Resolution Policy for Languages Canada. This policy is to be displayed and/or made available to all students*

12) Homestay Bookings, Changes and Fees

- a) The student will make all the homestay payments directly to GV Victoria. The host family will not accept, receive or charge any homestay fee directly to/from the student.
- b) The student agrees to let the Homestay Team know of any departure date changes and will pay for any extra nights added to the homestay period.
- c) The student will promptly reimburse the host family if he/she causes any damage to the home. No deposit will be required of the student by the host family.

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- d) If a student wishes to change the Homestay arrangement or leave the Homestay early, they will give the Homestay department and host family four (4) weeks' notice before changing/leaving. The four (4) week notice period is necessary to allow the host family and the program to make alternative arrangements. If the student wishes to move without four (4) weeks' notice, they shall pay the remainder of their original stay to the host, in addition to the fees for the student's new accommodations.
- e) If a student wishes to change to another homestay, the student will be charged the homestay change fee amount, as outlined in the homestay handbook of the current year.
- f) After the student completes their study period, the host family and the student agree not to continue the homestay arrangement without previous authorization by GV Homestay, and after that, the student and host shall do so at their own risk.

13) Emergency Student Removal

There may be other situations where the student is moved or removed from a homestay situation at the sole discretion of Global Village Homestay. This can be quite sudden or without notice. In such cases, four weeks' notice will not be provided and a cancellation payment will not be provided.

GV Homestay will work with the host family to manage the situation but GV Victoria may move a student with no notice if the situation warrants it. If the host family has been paid for the full four-week period and the student moves, the host family will be asked to refund the payment for the remaining nights.

For further clarification, four weeks' notice will not be provided and a cancellation payment will not be provided in the following situations:

1. The change is by mutual agreement of host family and student
2. The change is initiated at the request of the host family
3. The student is removed from the homestay in order to protect and ensure the physical or emotional safety of the student as determined by, and at the discretion of, Global Village
4. The student leaves the homestay at the end of the original homestay booking period

14) Underage Student Supervision Guidelines

Underage student rules are as follows:

The student is required to observe Canadian Laws.

1. The student is not permitted to drink alcohol, take illegal drugs or smoke any tobacco or cannabis products. Failure to comply with these rules will result in the student being sent home immediately.
2. The student is required to work co-operatively with school staff members, other students and the Homestay family.
3. The student is required to attend classes and educational excursions, and participate positively.
4. The student is expected to have dinner with the host family every evening for the first week, and most evenings thereafter. The student should also spend time with the host family on weekends whenever possible.

5. Students who are 12 to 15 years old are expected to return home by dinner time every day. Students who are 16 to 17 years old are expected to return home on weekday evenings (Sunday to Thursday nights) by 10:00 PM and 11:00 PM on weekends (Friday and Saturday nights).
6. If the student will not be home for dinner, they must call their hosts and tell them where they are, who they are with, and when they will be home.
7. The student is required to return home to sleep each night. The student is not allowed to have friends over to their Homestay without prior approval from the host family.
8. Should the student's health become a concern, please contact the Homestay Department as soon as possible.
9. Should the student break one of these guidelines, or the Homestay family encounters a situation that presents any question or difficulty, please contact the Homestay Team as soon as possible.
10. Students who are 12 to 15 years old are not allowed to go on any non-GV trip without prior permission.
11. A) Students who are 16 to 17 years old and are wishing to go on a daytime trip that is not organized by GV, must have the Parent Consent for Underage Student Private Non-School Day Trip waiver signed by their parents or legal guardian. This must be returned to GV a minimum of 48 hours prior to departure.

B) Students who are 16 to 17 years old and are wishing to go on an overnight trip that is not organized by GV, must have the Parent Consent for Underage Student Private Non-School Overnight Trip waiver signed by their parents or legal guardian and must be accompanied by or be staying with a chaperone age 25+ (identified by the parent or legal guardian) who is not a GV student. The document must be returned to GV a minimum of 48 hours prior to departure.

Global Village English Centre Victoria Ltd have had a number of underage students come to their schools, where they have succeeded as students and developed as individuals. The work of the homestay family and the school is integral to this process. Thank you for your cooperation as we continue to provide a caring and supportive atmosphere for Global Village students.

15) Hold Harmless Agreement

The host family and the student agree to release and hold Global Village English Centre Victoria Ltd. (GV Victoria) harmless for any damages which may be suffered or claimed as a result of entering into this Homestay Agreement and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, for any action or behavior of the Student during their stay with the Host. Students are bound by the same laws and statutes as Canadian citizens. GV Victoria and our authorized representatives are in no way to be considered as having legal guardianship for students.

16) Notes/Additional House Rules

Please list any rules of the home not covered by the GV agreement which you discussed during this review:

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17) Updates on host family profile

Please list any changes to the family members or pets living in the house since time of application. If there are any other changes to your household that you would like us to be aware of, please indicate them here as well.

If you are not sure what information you mentioned in the original application form, please let us know.

I/We have read the agreement and agree to honor it as a condition of my/our participation in the program.

Student Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date
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Host Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date
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GET-TO-KNOW-YOU SHEET FOR HOSTS AND STUDENTS

Please complete the following with your host family and keep it at your homestay for reference.

1. Host's Name(s): _____ Please call me/us: _____
2. Student's Name: _____ Please call me: _____
3. Student's Cell Phone Number: _____.
4. I have studied English for: _____ years.
5. My last day in Victoria will be: _____
6. While in Victoria I would like to see or experience: _____

7. While in Canada I would like to learn about: _____

8. I don't like to eat: _____
9. I like to eat: _____
10. My medication: _____
11. My birthday is: _____
12. My hobbies are: _____
13. I am a smoker _____ I am a non-smoker _____
The student will only smoke in this area _____ (ex.
back yard, balcony)
14. Shower time: _____ in the morning _____ in the evening
15. All showers will be no more than _____ minutes. (ex. 10-20 minutes, but no less
than 10 minutes)
16. Laundry will be done on _____ between _____ - _____
17. All phone calls will be kept to _____ between the hours of _____
& _____
18. Additional rules of the home: (eg. no outdoor shoes not to be worn inside the home.)

