

TRU Homestay Program

Student Guide



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

TRU WORLD

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Host Family / Student Expectations

HOST FAMILY	STUDENT
<p>House Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify your expectations early on. • If you have some specific rules (for example, no television after 10pm or no visitors after 7pm) then consider putting these rules in writing. • Be sure students understand any specific rules or preferences, or normally “unspoken” rules in your home. (For example, if a certain chair is reserved for a certain family member.) • If possible, explain rationale for rules. 	<p>House Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each family may have different house rules. Your family should explain these to you. • You should talk about the house rules with your host family. • Be sure to understand and respect their expectations. • If you are not sure what to do, ask questions.
<p>Food / Meals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell student what time you expect them for meals. • Provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. • Provide a variety of foods including adequate proteins, fruits and vegetables. • Ask if the student has serious dislikes or preferences. • Be prepared to spend a minimum of 50% of monthly fees on food. • If you elect to eat one of the three meals in a restaurant. You should pay for the student’s meal. 	<p>Food / Meals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time for family meals. • If you will be late or absent, phone your family in advance. • If you have allergies or serious dislikes, tell your family. • Offer to help with small tasks such as setting the table or clean up.
<p>Respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect cultural or religious differences. • Respect student’s privacy in their room. • Listen to and ask about additional needs. • Be truthful. Express concerns or rules in a respectful manner. 	<p>Respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the house rules. • Respect cultural or religious differences. • Pay rent on time. • Be truthful. Express concerns or needs in a respectful way.
<p>Family Life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat the student as a member of the family, not as a guest. • Treat them as you would wish your own children to be treated in another country. • Include the student in family activities where appropriate. 	<p>Family Life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are expected to behave as a member of the family, not as a guest. • Try to participate in family activities, both work and play. • Talk to your family about problems or needs.

HOST FAMILY	STUDENT
<p>Bedroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a comfortable, private room with a bed (sheets, blankets, and pillow), closet, dresser / shelves, desk, chair, lamp. • Respect the privacy of the student's bedroom. • Unless there is an emergency, permission to enter a student's should be requested. 	<p>Bedroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should keep their bedroom clean and wash bedding as needed. • Your host parents are not expected to clean your bedroom.
<p>Household chores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a member of the family, students should be expected to help with light household chores such as setting or clearing the table. • If students are interested, they may be encouraged to help with other light chores. • Students should not be expected to baby-sit for long periods of time, or engage in heavy cleaning or housework. 	<p>Household chores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a member of the family, you should help with the general household work such as you can offer to clear or set the table • If you are interested, you could help with meal preparation, taking out the garbage or sweeping the floor. • You may help with the children by reading to them or playing with them; however, you should not be expected to baby-sit.
<p>Language Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many international students choose to live in Homestay as an opportunity to practice English. • Host families can help by conversing with students on a number of topics and helping them build their vocabulary, or by explaining movies, television or other contexts. • Be patient and try to remember that lower level English students may need time and assistance to learn basic words and structures. 	<p>Language Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to improve your English, you must practice. • Your homestay is an excellent place to practice English. • Your host family can help you understand how English is spoken in everyday situations and can explain things you don't understand.
<p>Cultural Exchange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a host family you are the first representative of Canadian culture. • Students will perceive Canada and Canadian customs through your examples. • As you share your family customs, you may also want to explain other traditions you are aware of. • It is also useful to ask students how things are done in their culture in order to allow them to express their experience with cultural difference. 	<p>Cultural Exchange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many host families choose to host international students as a way to exchange culture. • They want to learn about your country and culture. • When you experience real differences between Canadian culture and your own, it may be interesting to share those differences with your Canadian hosts. • Sharing differences may also help them understand what you are experiencing in Canada.

What is the Homestay Program?

TRU World offers the Homestay Program for international students enrolled at TRU.

- The homestay program is for students who want to experience daily life with a Canadian family.
- The families are interviewed and carefully chosen for their interest in other cultures and for their commitment to help international students adjust to a different culture.
- TRU World staff carefully inspects and selects homestay homes.
- TRU World staff members are committed to assisting homestay students and host families.

What are the Benefits of the Homestay Program?

Care and Support of a Family

Living far away from your family and friends can be difficult. With Homestay you can experience family life and make new friends.

- Belong to a family
- Have support and friendship of a family
- Meals are provided and shared
- Participate in family activities
- Have special help and guidance with difficult situations

Language practice

Many students like to live in a Homestay because they can practice their English in everyday situations.

- Dinner conversations
- Everyday / household vocabulary
- Slang and common expressions

An Introduction to life in Kamloops

Your Homestay family can help you learn about the city and neighbourhood quickly.

- Where to shop
- Information about local recreation and entertainment
- Help with learning to live in a foreign culture and city
- A good first step before living independently

Cultural exchange and Canadian lifestyle

One of the most important reasons students choose Homestay is for cultural exchange.

- Learn about Canada and Canadian customs and celebrations
- Share your culture with Canadians
- Learn about ways that cultures can be different
- Know what Canadian homes are like
- Experience Canadian family lifestyle
- Eat Canadian food

Economic

Many international students prefer homestay because of financial reasons.

- All meals and meal preparation is included.
- Students don't need to shop or cook, so there is more time to study.

Fees and Payment – Policies

Homestay Program Fees

- The Homestay fee is \$660.00 Canadian per month.
- This \$660.00 must be paid directly to your host family every 30 days.
- Your Homestay fee is due on the same day as your arrival date every month.

For example:

You arrived at the homestay on the 23rd of August.

Your fees are due on the 23rd of each month.

When you apply for Homestay placement, there is an additional one time processing fee of \$150.00 Canadian. (Paid to TRU)

What is included in the Fees?

The monthly homestay fee of \$660.00 includes:

- A private room.
- Basic bedroom furniture (bed, desk, chair, bedding, light to study).
- Three meals per day and snacks.

What is NOT included in the Fees?

- Personal items (toiletries, clothes, books)
- Long distance telephone calls
- Internet
- Medical insurance
- Insurance for personal items (electronics, cameras)

Security Deposit

You must also pay a security deposit of an additional \$660.00 when you apply. This is paid to TRU to allow TRU to resolve any outstanding costs at the end of the program. The security deposit will be returned to you when you leave if:

- You have paid your fees properly during your stay.
- You do not owe your family for any expenses or damages.
- You have given 30 days notice and signed a Termination Notice.

Fees: If you go on Vacation

- If you go away on vacation for 7 consecutive nights or less, you will pay your normal homestay fee.
- If you are away for 8 consecutive nights, or up to 30 nights, your host family will refund you 50% of the prorated daily rate per night away.

For example:

Monthly payment is \$660

Prorated daily rate is $\$660 / 30 = \22

Refund is 50% of \$22 = \$11 per night away.

If you are away for 9 nights your refund would be \$99

Always tell your family if you will be away overnight. If you do not, the police and your parents may be called.

- If you are away for more than a month, you should offer to pack your belongings and move out of the room. TRU suggests a storage fee for luggage of \$30 per month.
- If you are away for more than a month and wish to keep your room, you should pay the 50% prorated daily rate (\$11 per day).

If you Leave your Homestay

- It is important to talk to your International Student Advisor (ISA) if you decide to leave your homestay.
- You must notify your host family 30 days before you will leave the homestay.
- You and your host family must sign a Termination Notice within one week of telling them you will leave.

For more information, go to pages 27, 28, and 31

What to expect at your Homestay

Canadian Families

There are many different kinds of Canadian families. There probably isn't a "typical" Canadian family and host families can be from a variety of backgrounds. Remember that Canada is a multicultural society, so although all hosts speak fluent English, their families may be from Europe, Asia, Latin America or another location. Some host families may have children, others do not. Some possible kinds of host family are:

- Mother, Father, and children
- Young couples
- Single men or women
- Grandparents
- Retired individuals
- Single mothers and children
- Single fathers and children

Canadian Houses

- Most Canadian houses are made from wood.
- In Kamloops, most families live in a house with a private yard or a townhouse, and sometimes in an apartment.
- Canadian houses normally have a kitchen with a cooking area and an eating area (many houses also have a separate dining room used for the evening meal).
- The living room usually has comfortable seats, a television, and stereo.
- There might be a fireplace in the living room.
- Many family houses will have an extra room in the basement for television or games.
- Bedrooms are usually on the top floor (upstairs) or in the basement (the lowest floor, often below the ground.)

Your bedroom

Your bedroom may be on the top floor (upstairs) or on the lower floor (basement). You will have your own bed in a private room with basic furniture.

- Normally, there are 2 sheets and blankets on your bed.
- Sleep between the 2 sheets.
- When you make your bed, tuck the sheets under the mattress.
- Normally, you should wash your sheets once a week.
- Your room should also have a desk and chair for you to study.
- The lighting should be good for reading and writing.
- You may want to have personal things to make your room more comfortable.

You are responsible to keep your bedroom clean.

Tip: Comfort

- If something about your room is uncomfortable, you may talk about additional needs with your homestay family.
For example: *“The temperature in my room is colder than I am accustomed to. Could you give me an extra blanket?”*
Or: *“The light in my room is not very good for reading. Is there another lamp I could use?”*

Meals

- Your host family will provide you with breakfast, a packed lunch to take to school, dinner, and some snacks.
- Meals in Canada are often casual.
- Meals are usually one plate. There may be less variety than in your culture.
- Once you are settled in your new home, your host family will probably ask you to prepare your own breakfast and lunch. Dinner will be prepared for you.
- Occasionally, you may want to share your cultural foods with your family.

Tip: Meal Times

- If you will be absent for a meal, you should tell your host family as soon as possible.
- It is a good idea to confirm your schedule with your host family before you leave home in the morning.

Breakfast:

- Breakfast times vary depending on schedules.
- Often students make their own breakfast.
- Breakfast is usually a simple meal of cereal with milk, toast or fruit.
- On weekends breakfast might be larger with eggs or pancakes.
- Coffee, tea, and juice are common morning drinks.
- In some families people have breakfast together, but in many situations everyone eats their breakfast separately because of work and school schedules.

Lunch:

- Lunch is usually around 12 pm
- Lunch is usually packed to take to school or work.
- The most common lunch is a sandwich, fruit, and a drink.
- Sandwiches come in many varieties. Thinly sliced meat, cheese, and vegetables are common fillings.
- Some Canadians will pack extra food from their dinner the night before to reheat at school or work.

Dinner:

- The largest meal is usually dinner.
- Canadians eat dinner earlier than in many countries, usually around 6 pm.
- Most Canadian families try to eat dinner together and talk about their day.
- Pasta, meat, and fish are popular main dishes.
- Potatoes and rice are very common and are cooked in a variety of ways.
- Salads often accompany meals or are eaten before the meal.

Food

- Canadians eat many different kinds of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Meat and potatoes are common items.
- You may find Canadian food to be “heavy” or “greasy” at first.
- Try to balance cooked meals with fresh fruit and vegetables for snacks.
- If you have any food allergies, you should tell your homestay family.

Tip: Food Preferences

- If there are foods you really dislike, or foods you really want, you should talk to your homestay family about your preferences. They will try to accommodate your preferences.
For example: *“At home I eat rice for breakfast. Would it be possible for me to cook rice in the mornings?”*
Or: *“I do not eat pork. Would it be possible for me to have something different?”*

Transportation

- Your homestay family will help you understand where to get a bus to and from the university.
- They can also help you understand the bus schedule.
- Once you have registered for your courses at TRU, you will receive a UPASS and can ride the bus without paying.
- Your homestay family will not allow you to use their car because of insurance complications.
- Sometimes your homestay parents may drive you to a location; however this is a courtesy, not a responsibility.

Medical Insurance

- All TRU international students must have medical insurance.
- It is a good idea to provide your homestay parent(s) with a copy of your insurance papers in case of an emergency.

Insurance

- If you have expensive personal items (a laptop or camera) you may have already purchased insurance in your own country.
- If you do not have insurance, ask your host family if they have insurance that would cover your items in the case of theft or fire.
- If they do not have an insurance plan that will cover your things, you should consider purchasing additional insurance.

There are many insurance companies in Kamloops. Two possibilities close to TRU are:

Capri Insurance

1-1315 Summit Dr., Kamloops
Phone: 828-2135

Barton Black & Robertson Insurance

Columbia Plaza Shopping Centre
370c-1210 Summit Dr. Kamloops
Phone: 372-8118

When you arrive in Kamloops

Introductions

- Meeting your host family for the first time may feel strange.
- Try to relax and get to know them.
- The first few days will be a time of adjustment for you and your family.
- Learn their names and ask some questions about their interests and lifestyle.
- You may also want to ask specific questions about the house and house rules.

House Rules

In the first week at your new home you will have many questions. Each family may have different rules or schedules, so you will need to ask questions to understand what your host family expects. Below is a list of questions you may want to ask your host family as you learn about the home and their expectations.

General

- *Where can I store my suitcase?*
- *Should I always remove my shoes?*
- *Are there any areas of the house that are private?*
- *Are there any items in the house I should not use or touch?*
- *Are there any rules about pets? (In or out, feeding times etc)*

Visitors

- *Can my friends visit me here?*
- *Can I have a friend overnight?*
- *Can I invite a friend for dinner?*
- *Can I have friends in my room?*

Household routine

- *What time do you go to bed?*
- *What time is quiet time?*

Tip: Late night activity

- It is normal for students to be awake when the family is asleep. You might want to study, email, or telephone your family late at night.
- Remember to be quiet and to ask your family if your late night activity disturbs their sleep.

- *What time do you wake up? On weekends?*
- *Is there a curfew?*
- *If I am going to be late, when should I call you?*

Tip: If you are late

- Canadians value time and punctuality. If you are going to be late, your family will expect a telephone call.

Meals and the Kitchen

- *What time do we have meals?*
- *Should I help set or clear the table?*
- *Can I help myself to food or drink or should I ask first?*
- *Do I need to prepare my own breakfast or lunch?*
- *Where are glasses / dishes / utensils kept?*
- *How does the stove / microwave work?*
- *What is the dish washing procedure?*

Bathroom

- *Can you show me how to operate the shower / bath / shower curtain / toilet?*
- *When is a good time to shower / bathe?*
- *How often may I shower / bathe?*
- *How long can I stay in the shower/ bathe?*
- *Where are cleaning supplies kept?*
- *Where can I find a mop or rags?*
- *Where should I put dirty towels?*

Bedroom

- *Should I make my bed everyday?*
- *How often should I clean my room?*
- *Will anyone else in the family enter my room?*
- *If I am too cold or too hot, what should I do?*

Washing Clothes

- *When is a good time/day to wash my clothes?*
- *Where should I keep my dirty clothes?*
- *How do I operate the clothes washer and dryer?*

Transportation / My Neighbourhood

- *How do I get to school?*
- *Where is the bus stop?*
- *How long is the bus ride?*
- *What is the bus schedule?*
- *Where is the nearest store to purchase toiletries or personal items?*
- *Where is the nearest park or place to walk?*
- *Where is the nearest post office?*

Telephone

- *Which telephone can I use?*
- *Do I need to buy a prepaid phone card for long distance calls?*
- *Can I listen to messages on the answering machine?*
- *What should I say if I answer the phone?*

Tip: Telephone Manners

- Usually Canadians answer the phone and say “*Hello*”. However, some families may prefer to answer and say “*The Smith Residence*” (Smith is the family name).
- If you answer the phone and the caller asks to speak to a family member who is not at home, you should say “*I’m sorry, John is not here. Can I take a message, or would you like to call back?*”
- If the caller wants to leave a message, you should write the message on a piece of paper and leave it beside the phone

- *Can I use the computer?*
- *When is a good time to use the computer?*
- *Is there a time limit to my computer use?*
- *Should I pay for the internet connection?*
- *Can I watch the T.V.?*
- *Do I need special instructions?*
- *Can I use the DVD?*
- *Are there times when I should not use the TV or DVD?*
- *Is there a stereo or radio to listen to music or practice my listening skills?*

Cigarettes and Alcohol

- Most Canadians do not allow smoking in their homes.
- If you smoke, ask where you can smoke outside.
- In British Columbia, people under 19 years old may not drink alcohol
- If you are 19 years old and would like to drink alcohol, you must ask your host family for permission to bring alcohol into the home.

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated in the host family's home.

House work (Chores)

Your host family expects you to behave as a member of the family. Canadian families usually share household work regardless of gender. Your host family will appreciate it if you offer to help with general chores such as:

- Set or clear the table
- Wash dishes or tidy the kitchen
- Tidy the bathroom after each use
- Pick up your personal items and keep them in your bedroom

If you have time or interest, you could also offer to:

- Help prepare meals
- Assist with recycling or other chores
- Play with children

Your host family should **not** expect you to:

- Baby-sit.
- Do household cleaning or work in the yard or garden.

You should never agree to do extra work in exchange for your accommodation fees. This could be considered illegal work and cause problems with your study permit..

Religion

Your host family may or may not be religious. Many different religions are practiced in Canada. Canadians are free to choose their own form of spiritual practice. Some Canadian families go to church or worship services weekly, other families only attend during religious holidays, and others do not practice religion.

It is important for both you and your host family to respect religious differences.

- If you want to practice your religion, your host family should not interfere.
- If you practice religion at home, then you will need to talk to them about when and where it would be appropriate.
- If you use candles or incense in your practice, ask your family if this is OK. They might worry about a fire.
- If your host family invites you to attend their worship service, you may choose to accept or politely decline.
- If you chose to attend a worship service as part of your cultural education, you should not feel that it is necessary to continue to attend.
- You should never participate in any religious worship that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Celebrations

- Try to enjoy celebrations and learn about Canadian lifestyle and values.
- Ask questions and learn if the traditions in your family are the same for all Canadians or specific for your family and their background.
- Share the special celebrations from your culture.

Daily Life in Canada / Everyday Situations

Greetings

- “*Good morning*” is said when you first see someone in the morning.
- “*Good night*” is said when you are going to bed.
- “*Hi*” or “*Hello*” are used at other times of the day.
- “*How are you?*” or “*How are you doing?*” Is often used as part of a greeting; most people simply reply “*Fine, thanks.*”
- Canadians often ask, “*How is it going?*” (Which sounds like “*Howzit goin?*”) This is also a greeting. You can reply, “*Good, thanks.*” Or “*Fine, thanks.*”

Eating

- If your hosts offer you more food and you say “*no thanks*”, they may not offer a second time.
- If you want more food, you should accept the first offer or ask “*May I please have some more _____?*”

Tip: If you are hungry

- It is polite to ask for more food, if you know there is more available. *“If there is any more rice, I would love to have some more.”* Or, *“Is there any more soup? I am really hungry today.”*
- If you do not enjoy a particular dish, but would like more to eat, you can say, *“Thank you for preparing this dish, but I don’t really enjoy potatoes. Could I have more salad instead?”*

Table Manners

Most meals are eaten with a knife, fork, or spoon. It is acceptable to use your hands for certain items such as:

- Sandwiches
- Hot dogs or hamburgers
- Pizza
- Toast
- Chicken wings or drumsticks
- Tacos
- Corn on the cob
- Fruit
- Foods served with dips (chips, raw vegetable sticks, bread)
*Never dip a second time once the food has touched your mouth.

It is considered polite to:

- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Talk without food in your mouth.
- Not use your fingers to push food onto your spoon or fork
- Keep your knife away from your mouth
- Eat quietly without slurping
- Pick food out of your teeth in private (not at the table)
- Ask for items to be passed to you
For example: *“Please pass the salt.”*

Bath / Shower

- You will probably share a bathroom with other members of your family.
- It is usual to leave the bathroom door open when it is not in use.
- Most Canadian bathrooms have the toilet, sink, and shower or bath tub in one room.
- Canadian bathrooms do not have drains in the floor. Water can only be drained from the sink or bath tub.
- Often the shower is inside the bath tub with a curtain or door to keep the water from spraying outside the bathtub area.
- After using the bath, shower, or sink it is polite to wipe up any water you have spilled.
- Dirty or wet towels may be hung to dry or put in a laundry basket (ask your family).
- If there is one tap, the temperature can be adjusted by turning the tap left or right. Turning left will usually make the water hot. Turning right will usually make the water cold.

- To adjust water temperature there may be two taps. The left tap is usually hot – it will have the letter H or a red coloured marking. The right tap is usually cold – it will have the letter C or a blue coloured marking.
- Most Canadians shower in the morning and wash their hair in the shower.
- If you prefer to bathe in the evening, try to take your shower or bath before 9:30 p.m.
- The hot water systems in Canada use a boiler. If you take a very long shower, there may not be enough hot water for the next person.
- Try to limit your shower time to 10 minutes.

Shower

1. Step into the bathtub and pull the curtain or door closed. (It is important to close it completely to keep the water inside the bath area).
2. Be sure the curtain is inside the bathtub.
3. Turn the hot and cold taps in the bathtub until you have a good temperature.
4. Pull or turn the knob to make the water to flow from above.
5. When you turn the water off, remember to reverse the water flow back into the bathtub.

Toilet

1. Used toilet paper should be put in the toilet.
2. Do not put any other garbage down the toilet.
3. As a courtesy, men should put the seat down after use.
4. If the toilet is dirty from your use, clean it with the toilet brush before leaving the bathroom.

Kitchen

- Your host family may have appliances you do not know how to use. Ask for instructions if you do not know how to use them.
- Try to observe where things are stored in the kitchen and replace items where you found them.

Garbage and Recycling

- Most Canadian families recycle paper, glass, and metal products.
- Ask your hosts their procedure for recycling.
- Some families may also compost organic waste for their garden.
- Ask your family if they compost and how to proceed.

Privacy

- Canadians value privacy.
- Normally, if a person wishes to be alone they will go to their room and close the door. (However, if this is done too often, others may think the person is not interested in the family).
- If you want privacy or quiet, it is acceptable to close your door.
- If family members wish to enter your room, they should knock.
- If children want your attention, you can tell them you need to study and close the door.

Pets

- Many Canadians have pets that live inside the house.
- This may include dogs, cats, birds, or other animals.
- Canadians often see pets as a part of the family and pets are free to enter all rooms.
- If you do not want animals in your room, it is acceptable to close your door and explain to your hosts that you are uncomfortable having the pet in your room.
- Ask your family about rules regarding pets. For example, some families do not like their cats to go outside or only let their dogs outside if a family member is present.

Phone Calls

- If you are making a long distance call, buy a prepaid phone card.
- If you are calling directly, follow this pattern:
 - DIAL 011 + COUNTRY CODE + CITY(or AREA) CODE + LOCAL NUMBER
 - If the city or area code starts with a 0, omit the 0.
- For detailed instructions or codes, please read the Telephone Book. Ask your host family to help you.
- If you are having difficulty, you may dial 0 for operator assistance.

Going Out with Your Family

You may be invited to join your family for an activity, outing, restaurant meal, or even a vacation. It is a good idea to discuss financial expenses with your family before accepting the invitation. Some families will have the ability to pay for you, but others may not be able to pay extra.

- If your host family pays for your activities, you should thank them.
- You might also want to consider making a special meal for them.

Restaurants

- If your family invites you to a restaurant as part of the normal meal schedule, they should pay for your meal.
- If it is a special occasion or an expensive restaurant, you may be asked to contribute to the cost.
- If you are expected to pay, and you chose not to join them, they should provide you with a meal to have at home.
- If you are unsure, it is OK to ask your family about who will pay.

Activities / Outings

- Your host family will probably want to take you out to experience Canadian lifestyle.
- If you are invited to join an activity, be sure to ask your family what you should bring and if you will need money.
- If your host family says that you should pay, and you don't want to spend the money, it is ok to say "no thank you" and stay home.
- If you are not interested or have different plans, tell your family. For example:
"Thank you for the invitation, but I have to study for my exam."

Vacations

- Your host family may go away on vacation during your stay.
- If your family will be away for more than a couple of days, you should tell your ISA.
- If your family goes away and you remain at home, they should provide you with food and other things you will need during their absence.
- Be sure to get emergency telephone numbers to contact them or someone else if you need to.
- If your host family invites you to join the vacation, you should talk to them about how much it will cost (Ask about accommodation, transportation, meals, etc.)
- If you choose not to join the vacation, your family should provide you with everything you will need while they are away.
- If you stay home without the family, you should not have guests unless your family has given you permission.

Canadian Culture – Some Possible Differences

Canadian culture will probably be different than your own culture. The differences may be large or small. Some differences may bother you, others will not. It is important to remember that the cultural differences you experience are all part of your learning adventure. Try to be patient, open-minded, and most of all to keep your sense of humour. You can read about some of the main differences below.

Individualism

- Canadians value individualism.
- Most Canadians are independent and may not depend on their family in the same way as people in your culture do.
- Individuals are expected to make their own decisions
- Individuals are responsible for themselves.
- Canadian children are taught to think critically, make individual choices, and be independent

Equality

- Canadians value equality.
- They consider all individuals in society as equal with equal rights and opportunities.
- Women and men are equal in Canadian culture.
- Status is **not** determined by sex, age, race or social rank.
- Equal respect is shown to all individuals.

Children and seniors

Because Canadians value independence and equality they may have different attitudes than your culture toward the treatment of children or seniors.

- Children often speak directly about their opinions or preferences.
- Even young children are permitted to express disagreement with their parents.
- Seniors often live alone and are independent.

Informality

- Perhaps because Canadians value equality, they are often quite informal.
- It is normal to be asked to use first names by older people or people in superior positions (instructors, host family, or manager in a work situation)
- Canadian dress is also usually informal.
- People often wear quite casual clothes to work and school.

Time

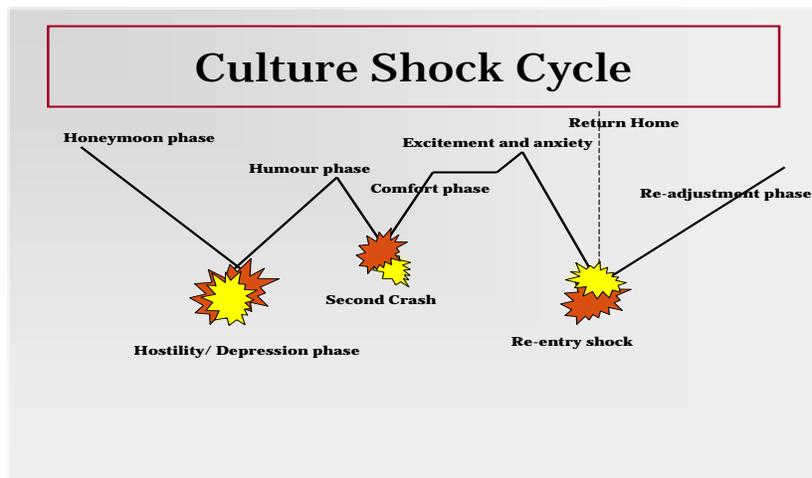
- Canadians value punctuality.
- It is considered disrespectful to be late.
- If you are going to be late for an appointment, it is a good idea to telephone and say you will be late.
- Because Canadians like to be on time and value schedules, they may seem to be very busy.

Culture Shock

Most people that live, study, or work in another culture experience culture shock. Culture shock is normal and will stop after some time. It is caused by experiencing many cultural differences which can make you tired. Some people become angry, but others become depressed. Some possible symptoms include:

- Stress
- Disorientation
- Anxiety
- Homesickness
- Weight gain or loss
- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of energy
- Confusion
- Difficulty focusing on studies

Culture Shock Cycle



- **Honeymoon Phase:** When you first arrive you are curious and everything is exciting.
- **Hostility/Depression Phase:** Confusion about the new culture can make you feel sad or angry, *“I hate this place. I want to go home.”*
- **Recovery/Humour Phase:** You feel better and can laugh at your mistakes, *“I did the silliest thing yesterday.”*
- **Second Crash:** Some people experience another “down” in the cycle because they were feeling confident in the new culture and suddenly feel uncomfortable again.
- **Comfort Phase:** You begin to feel totally comfortable in the new culture. *“This place feels like home.”*
- **Excitement and Anxiety:** Before you return home, you may experience excitement and anxiety about the return, exams, and goodbyes.
- **Re-Entry Shock:** Often when people return home, they experience discomfort because they have change, *“Nobody understands”* is a common feeling.
- **Re-adjustment Phase:** You begin to feel normal again.

Culture Shock and your Host Family Relationships

- Your experience of culture shock may affect the way you feel about your host family or your new home.
- If culture shock affects your mood or behaviour, it is important to talk to your host family so that they will understand how you feel.
- Your behaviour during the low phases of culture shock may also confuse your family.
- Because the experience of culture shock can be emotional, often words or actions can be misunderstood.
- All new relationships take time and patience.
- Living with a new family and the experience of culture shock can be difficult, but it will pass.

What You Can Do About Culture Shock

- Talk to your host family. Explain how you feel and what is difficult for you.
- Talk to your ISA.
- Talk to your friends or other international students about their experience.
- Practice speaking English as much as possible; language use is very important to understand culture.
- Try to use humour. Laugh at your mistakes.
- Remember there is no right or wrong in culture, only differences.
- Be curious. Remember, this is an adventure.
- Get involved. Join a club or a team. Try to stay busy and make friends.
- Remember to eat and sleep.
- Get some exercise.

Tip: Culture Shock

- Remember that culture shock is normal and natural.
- Remember that it will not last.
- Talking to people will help.
- Take care of yourself.

Intercultural Communication

Different cultures have different styles of communication and communication behaviours.

- Sometimes this can be confusing and cause misunderstandings.
- Do not assume that what is normal for you is normal for others.
- Others may understand your words or gestures differently than you want them to.

Direct and Indirect Communication

Indirect

Suggest / Imply

Avoid confrontation

Goal is to preserve the relationship

Non-verbal signals important

Direct

Say what is meant

Say the truth even if it is difficult

Goal is to exchange information

Spoken word carries meaning

- Canadians often communicate directly.
- They will say what they mean and can be very direct.
- They will appreciate your directness.
- Canadians don't use as many non-verbal signals as some cultures.

Example:

A student is cold and tries to express this to her host family by rubbing her arms and wearing sweaters. Her host family does not understand that she is cold until she says directly, "I am cold."

Remember, physical behaviours that mean something in your culture, may not have the same meaning for Canadians.

Emotional and Neutral Expressions

- In some cultures people are emotional when they communicate. They use a lot of facial expressions or arm and hand movements to express their ideas and feelings.
- In other cultures people do not show any emotion or move their bodies.
- It is important to remember that these behaviours are often cultural and not to understand them as aggressive, angry or disinterested.

Example:

The host family always asks the student if he is OK, or if there is something wrong. He doesn't know why they think something is wrong, he is very happy. When he talks to them about it, they explain that they are worried because he does not smile as often as they do.

Eye Contact

- Canadians usually expect people to look at them when they are talking.
- If you do not look at someone when they are talking, they may think you are not listening or do not care about what they say.
- If you are interested, it is important to keep eye contact.

Communication across Cultures

Misunderstandings can occur when people from different cultures are communicating.

This can happen because of:

- Cultural differences
- Language difficulties
- Different meanings for gestures
- Physical behaviours

It is important to ask questions to be certain you have understood.

It is OK to ask people to repeat their words, say them differently or more slowly.

For example, you can say,

“Could you please repeat what you said a different way?”

“I understood _____. Is that correct?”

“I don’t understand _____. Could you please explain?”

Example:

At first, the host mother talked to the student often. After a few weeks she didn’t talk as much. The student didn’t understand until she heard her host mother telling a friend, *“Maybe she isn’t interested in what I say, or maybe she doesn’t understand, but she never looks at me when I am talking.”*

The Pause: Speech Patterns

- Different cultures have different patterns of speaking.
- In some cultures there is a space or pause between speakers.
- In other cultures people speak almost at the same time.
- Canadians sometimes feel uncomfortable when there is silence between speakers.
- Sometimes they may think you need help and will try to speak for you.

Tip: Conversation

- If you feel that your Canadian friends are not giving you enough time to think or seem to speak for you, it is OK to say, *“I am thinking.”* Or *“One moment please.”*
- Then they will usually wait patiently for you to speak.

Misunderstandings and Problems

Life with a family can have wonderful moments and difficult moments. All families have misunderstandings and problems. Most problems can be solved by talking about them with the family. TRU World is available to assist students and host families with problems that they are unable to solve. Your ISA can give you advice and assistance.

Types of problems

- Many problems are because of different expectations or needs.
- Often problems are because of communication problems.
- Misunderstanding behaviour or words can lead to problems.
- The host family or the student may experience a change that causes changes to the household.

In all of these situations, if hosts and students talked about their needs and expectations, the situation would improve. It is important to talk about problems before they become bigger problems. Canadian host families expect and want students to talk to them about problems.

Communication

If you have a problem or a misunderstanding with your host family:

- Talk to them about how you feel.
- Tell them what you need.
- Don't be shy to talk to your family.
- Don't assume they will understand without words.
- If you cannot talk to your family, talk to your ISA.
- Do not leave a problem for a long time. A small problem can become larger if it is not addressed quickly.

ISA Support

If you have a problem with your host family, you should first try to talk to the family.

Your ISA can help you if:

- You have talked to your family and it did not change.
- You need help with translating.
- The problem is cultural.
- You are confused and uncomfortable.
- You want to talk to your host family, but you do not know how to express the way you feel.

Serious Problems

Serious problems do not often occur. TRU host families are all carefully selected and evaluated. However, if you have a serious problem with your host family that you are unable to talk to them about, you should talk to your ISA.

Sexuality

- No one in your host family should ever behave sexually toward you.
- Explain to the person that you feel uncomfortable.
- If you feel a family member is behaving sexually toward you, speak to your ISA.

Other Harassment

- If you feel that someone in your host family has been disrespectful of you, your culture or your religion, you can tell them that you feel uncomfortable.
- If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your family, ask your ISA for advice or assistance.
- If you talk to your family and nothing changes, speak to your ISA.

To Change Your Accommodation

If you want to leave your homestay, it is a good idea to speak to your ISA. There are different reasons you may want to change your accommodation and there are different accommodation choices. Your ISA will give you advice and help you make the best choice.

Move to a different homestay

If you and your ISA decide that it is best for you to have a different homestay experience, the ISA can help you find a new host family.

- Before you can change your homestay, you must consult with your ISA
- Sometimes people are not a good match and a different situation may be better.
- Your ISA can help you find a homestay where you will be happy.

Move to Student Residence or Private (Independent) Rental

Although many homestay students stay with their host family for years, other students may decide to leave a homestay for many different reasons.

- Many students find that after a period of time, they are prepared for independent living.
- Students want to live on campus.
- Students find that the homestay experience does not meet their expectations or needs.

To Leave Your Homestay

- You must notify your host family **30 days** before you will leave the homestay.
- You and your host family must sign a Termination Notice within one week of telling them you will leave.

For example:

You want to move out August 13th.

You must tell your family July 13th.

You must sign a Termination Notice by July 20th (1 week after you tell them)

If there are extra days after your normal rent payment date, you should pay the prorated daily rate for each extra day.

For example:

You normally pay your rent on the 20th of each month, but you will be leaving on the 31st of the month. So, you will pay for an extra 11 days.

Prorated daily rate is $\$660/30 = \22

11 days x $\$22 = \242

You must pay $\$242$ more

Termination Notice

- You can obtain a Termination Notice from TRU World (3rd floor of the International Building) or from the appendix at the end of this guide.
- The form must be signed and returned to TRU World for the return of your security deposit.

Security Deposit

- TRU World will return the security deposit (\$660) if no money is owed to the host family and you have given 30 days notice.
- If you have not given 30 days notice, TRU World will pay the host family for the additional days with part of your security deposit.
- The security deposit will be returned to you in 4-6 weeks after you move out.
- If money is owed, it will be deducted from your security deposit.
- Money owed could include:
 - You move in the first semester with no justifiable reason.
 - You move without 30 days notice and signed Termination notice.
 - You have outstanding expenses in the home.

Evaluation Form

HOMESTAY EVALUATION (to be completed by Student) PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Date _____ Name of Host Family _____

Name of Student _____

Student Number _____

Please answer the questions by circling the number and/or commenting in the spaces provided:

- 1 - strongly disagree/very bad/never
- 2 - disagree/bad/sometimes
- 3 - it is okay/so-so
- 4 - agree/quite good/often
- 5 - strongly agree/very good/all the time

1. I received some information about homestay before coming to Kamloops. That information was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5

What other information would you like to have received before coming to Kamloops?

2. My host family is kind, friendly and helpful.

1 2 3 4 5

My host family and I talk together often and they help me with my English.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I enjoy the food my host family gives me.

1 2 3 4 5

A typical breakfast includes: _____

A

typical lunch includes: _____

A typical dinner includes: _____

4. My room and place to study are good.

1 2 3 4 5

5. My host family and I do things together. For example:

Eating meals 1 2 3 4 5	Shopping 1 2 3 4 5	Recreational Activities 1 2 3 4 5
Watching television 1 2 3 4 5	Sightseeing 1 2 3 4 5	Helping around the house 1 2 3 4 5

Other: _____

6. Would you recommend this host family to other students? Why?

7. What do you like about homestay?

8. Was there anything you did not like about the homestay experience?

9. What can TRU do to improve the homestay program for our students?

10. How long have you stayed with this family? Why are you leaving? Please explain.

Other comments: _____

Termination Notice Form

TERMINATION NOTICE: HOMESTAY

I _____, Student No. _____, will be leaving
(student name)
your residence on _____
(Date Moving Out)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY

Student Signature

Date

To be eligible for a refund of the security deposit, the student must:

1. Complete this form and submit it to the host family at least 30 days before he/she moves out (verbal notice followed by this written notice within one week is acceptable);
2. pay all outstanding accounts;
3. ask host family to acknowledge this notice by signing below;
4. return the completed form to the International Education office immediately.
5. Refund cheque will be ready for pick up in the International Education office 4 to 6 weeks after the student has moved out.

Please complete, check off where applicable and comment if necessary.

_____ I acknowledge this notice.

_____ needs to reimburse me for the following outstanding expenses*:

\$ _____ for _____
\$ _____ for _____

(if amount is unknown, please estimate & contact ISA with actual amount when known)

I am available to host another student: **Yes** _____ (date available) **No**

Comments:

Host Family Name (please print)

Date

Host Family Signature

International Student Advisor Signature

- *1. Please give one of the International Student Advisors a call if you are not sure about this.
2. If you have to wait to find out the exact amount (e.g. telephone bill), estimate the amount for now.
3. Once your student has settled the outstanding expenses with you, please let us know so that we can release the cheque to the student.
4. We advise that you ask your student to use a telephone card once he/she has given you notice.