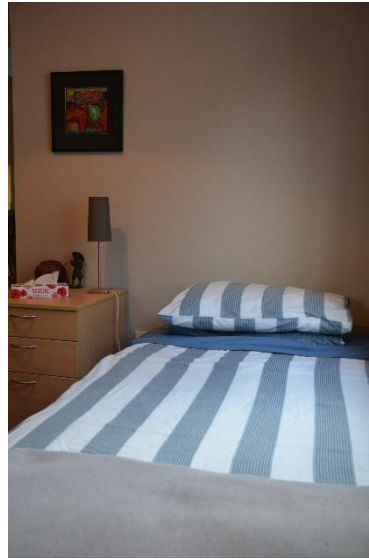




ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACADEMY  
The University of Auckland

# THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACADEMY HOMESTAY GUIDELINES For Students



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## **WELCOME TO ELA HOMESTAY**

*Homestay living is a valuable part of an international student's learning experience and should be enjoyable and rewarding. It is a popular form of accommodation for students wishing to improve their English language skills as well as a great way of exploring the local culture and getting the most out of experiencing New Zealand life.*

We value our students and our homestays very highly and regularly update the ELA homestay database so that students are matched with the right homestays, and are placed with families that can best meet their needs. Host families are carefully assessed and selected through a strict registration process which involves an interview, home inspection and police vetting. Our host families live across Auckland, but always within a 45-minute ride of the school.

Host families look forward to sharing the language and culture of New Zealand with you, while also learning about the language and culture of your home country. Students are expected to respect their host families, and adopt a flexible attitude towards the whole experience, and host families will do the same in return. Key words to building a successful homestay relationship are consideration and communication.

The ELA has dedicated staff who will help you with any concerns, and our Accommodation and Pastoral Care Coordinator is responsible for dealing with all homestay queries.

We want you to enjoy your time in New Zealand, and we hope that you have a good time with your homestay family. This booklet has been prepared to help you adjust to the new living situation. Please read this booklet carefully, and if there is something you still do not understand, please ask someone – your host family, your teachers, or the ELA Homestay staff.

## **HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION**

Your host(s) will provide you with your own room, a standard sized bed, bedside table, desk, chair, lamp, sheets and towels , and somewhere to put your clothes.

You may supply your own linen if you wish, however you are not expected to. Medical insurance, entertainment and personal toiletries are the student's own responsibility.

ELA students under the age of 18 are required to live with an ELA homestay family.

We make sure that students of the same nationality are not placed together in the same homestay to ensure that students have many opportunities to practice their English.

## WHAT IS A TYPICAL NEW ZEALAND FAMILY?

Kiwi families come in lots of different shapes and sizes. While some families consist of two parents and children, others are just a single parent with children or a single individual. Most Kiwis are pet lovers and it is very common for households to have dogs, cats, or rabbits.

Kiwis value having a balanced lifestyle between work and leisure or family time. On weekdays people work and go to bed early. Weekends are commonly spent resting and relaxing, enjoying leisure activities, or attending religious services. New Zealanders enjoy the outdoors, so it is common for families to spend a lot of time outside enjoying good weather, and to have an active lifestyle. As a homestay student, you will have the opportunity to join family activities.

Kiwis also value manners so remember to say "Please" and "Thank you" in daily conversation. You can also be polite by using phrases such as "Excuse me" and "May I..."

## YOUR FIRST DAY

### Arrivals

Students are able to arrange an airport pick-up service through the ELA. You will be met on arrival at Auckland International Airport by our airport transfer agent and Airport Shuttle Services. If you are unable to find the airport transfer agent, you must wait in front of the helpdesk (which is next to the flower shop) in the Arrivals lounge.

### Daily routine

Make sure you are informed about the daily household routines when you first arrive. You will need to find out about the most convenient time to take a shower or a bath, meal times, and how to make the bed.

### Get to know your host family

Your host will be at home to greet you on the day that you arrive. Your first day is very important, and can leave a lasting impression. Make an effort to get to know your host family, and this will help you both to feel comfortable and reduce 'culture shock'.

Host family members are just as curious about you as you are about them! You can share your interests by talking about your academic study, college life, language and culture. You could bring photographs of your family, university, or hometown.

If you are sharing your homestay with other international students, please take this opportunity as an advantage and learn about their language and culture!

### Transportation

Your homestay family will help you to travel on your first day, showing you how to commute by public transport between the ELA and your homestay. Please

make sure that you have your homestay address and the contact details of your host family before leaving the house. You will have to pay for the cost of your transport.

*You must arrive at the ELA by 8:15am on your first day.* Your first day at the ELA will be an orientation day. You will be given a tour of the campus, and ELA staff can help you to purchase and register a travel card for public transport, open a bank account, and answer all of your questions.

## MEALS

*Homestay accommodation includes two meals (breakfast and dinner) on weekdays and three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) on weekends and public holidays.*

Students are expected to eat the normal family meals that host families provide. Your host(s) are not required to provide foreign food, however should be sensitive to your needs, conscience and religious beliefs. Please inform the ELA and your host family if you have special dietary requirements, such as Halal, vegetarian, or allergies. We will match students with families that can cater to this.

New Zealanders eat meat quite often, and they eat a lot of potatoes too. Popular meals include curries, mince pies, roast dinners, and fish and chips, but as New Zealanders come from many ethnic backgrounds, there is also a lot of international food eaten and available. Many students think New Zealanders eat a lot, so don't be afraid to say "Thank you, that's enough."

If you miss the food from home, there are a wide range of authentic restaurants and international food courts near the ELA and Queen Street. You could also go shopping at the supermarket with your host family, and show them the food that you like to eat.

### Breakfast

Breakfast is usually very casual in New Zealand homes, and eaten between 7am and 9am. A typical Kiwi breakfast is often a help yourself meal with cereal or toast and a cup of a hot drink. Your host family will inform you which food or ingredients are used for breakfast meals. You can simply prepare your own breakfast, eat, and then tidy up once you finish. Most families only have a cooked breakfast on the weekend or special occasions.

### Lunch

On weekends and public holidays, lunch is either a help yourself meal or prepared by the host family. Lunch is often a cold meal like a sandwich with bread, cheese, ham and salad. During winter, a bowl of soup and bread is popular.

## Dinner

Dinner (also known as tea) is the main meal of the day in New Zealand households. It is eaten after 5.30pm and often includes meat or fish, vegetables or salad with rice, bread, potatoes or pasta.

Dinner is also about families gathering, sharing their evening together and catching up on the day's events. Families usually eat communally around the dining table. Having a conversation with your host(s) at the dinner table everyday will help you to improve your English quickly.

Dinner is a great time to learn how to cook some Kiwi meals, but you could also ask if you can help the cook by preparing vegetables, laying the table, pouring drinks, or serving the meal. Ask your host family if you want to cook, as your hosts might like to try food from your country and you can cook for them something you enjoy at home.

Please inform your host parent(s) in the morning if you intend to return home late and do not need dinner, or if you would like to have your dinner put aside for heating up later.

## SHARING A HOME

*The success of your homestay experience depends on how much you interact with your host family. Build a good relationship and enjoy and explore your time in Auckland!*

Homestay students should live as full members of the home. Be a part of the family and when you are invited, make an effort to participate in family activities, events and adventures. Communicate frequently to avoid any misunderstandings between you and your host(s). If you find understanding your host(s) difficult, please ask them to speak slowly or to write down what they are saying on a piece of paper.

Being a part of the family also means that there are responsibilities you need to take as a family member. Please read the following guidelines carefully and discuss with your host(s) any house rules.

### House key

Your host(s) may provide you with a house key or alarm code and it is your responsibility to keep this secure. If you lose the house key, you will have to pay to replace it.

### Cleaning

Children in New Zealand are taught to help with the household chores from a young age. You may, as a part of the family, also be asked to help with chores such as doing the dishes after meals or cleaning your bathroom. Please offer to help when you can.

Keeping your room clean is your responsibility. You can vacuum, dust, and open the bedroom window for fresh air on a regular basis. Please avoid storing food in

your bedroom, hanging wet clothes, and hanging or sticking pictures on the walls. Ask your host parent(s) to show you where they keep the vacuum cleaner and other cleaning materials.

### Laundry

Students must consult with the homestay about how and when laundry should be done. Some families may be happy to do their student's laundry but others may prefer the student to do it. If you are asked to wash your own clothing, or if you prefer to, then please discuss with your host parent(s).

Please do not leave wet washing in your rooms to dry. Many New Zealand homes are wooden and damp. Hand washing of underwear and delicate clothing can be done by you, but ask your host where to leave it for drying. Usually clothes are dried outside on a clothesline.

### Telephone

If you wish to use the landline telephone, please first ask your host family. Some families use their landline phones for business purposes.

Local calls are free in New Zealand. Additional charges apply to telephone calls to areas outside of Auckland, mobiles phones (021, 022, 027 and 029) and 0900 numbers. It is recommended that you use your own mobile phone to make these calls, or you can purchase a prepaid international telephone card (available from the pharmacy on campus or most dairies).

The ELA will not be responsible for any of these costs during your time with the homestay family.

### Computers and the Internet

All of our homestays are required to provide access to the internet for their students, and some have shared home computers that you can use. The cost of this is included within your homestay payment, so you will not be charged any extra to use it.

Please respect this privilege by not using a lot of data or exceeding data limits. Wireless internet is available at the ELA and you can get the login details from Reception. You may also like to consider getting data for your mobile phone, and there are many good plans to suit your needs.

### Shower

In New Zealand you have to pay for all the water you use, and also the electricity required to heat the water, so it can be expensive.

Bathroom habits vary from household to household as well as country to country. Your homestay family will explain the house rules about bathing and washing, or ask your homestay family what is the most convenient time to take a shower or bath.

In New Zealand it is normal to shower for only 7-10 minutes, but please try not to stay in the bathroom for more than 15 minutes as there may be other people

who need to use it. You are required to provide your own soap, shampoo, conditioner and toothpaste. It is not recommended that you have a shower after 10.00pm, as this could disrupt your family.

### Smoking and Drinking

Whether you are a smoker or a non-smoker, we will try to place you with a family who is the same. Do not smoke anywhere inside the family home, unless members of the homestay family do and they have said that you are allowed to also.

Drinking is not allowed in a homestay situation unless the host parent(s) have approved it, so you must check with them.

## YOUR SAFETY & SECURITY

It is important that your homestay family has a contact telephone number for you and that you have a contact telephone number for them, so that you can speak with each other when you are away from the home. This way if you go out after class, in the evening or on the weekend, then you can stay in touch, but please also provide them with an approximate time of your return.

Students under the age of 18 are not allowed to stay away from their designated homestay family without written permission from the ELA.

Please check with your homestay family in advance if you would like to bring any friends over to your homestay for a visit.

Please help to keep your home safe and secure by locking doors and windows when you go out, closing gates, and switching off heaters and electrical appliances when they are not in use.

### Accident and illness

If you are sick or have an accident, your host(s) will contact a doctor or the nearest Accident and Emergency department, as appropriate. Students are expected to pay for their own medical expenses. The host(s) should not pay for these expenses and they will not be reimbursed by the ELA.

### Medication

Please inform your homestay of any medicines that you need to take. Also, please bring any medications that you need to take on a regular basis.

## HOMESTAY PAYMENTS

Staying in a homestay costs \$269.50 per week.

Homestay payments need to be made in the Enrolments and Homestay office on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the ELA offices in Symonds St. The minimum stay is 4 weeks, so you will need to pay for 4 weeks initially.

Over the Christmas Break period (21 December 2015 – 4 January 2016), homestay costs increase to \$339.50 per week due to the host(s) having to provide an extra meal of lunch every day. This is standard procedure for the ELA, however if you would prefer to arrange your own lunch, you can discuss this possibility with your host(s) and they can reimburse you directly.

## **EXTENDING OR CHANGING HOMESTAYS**

*Students are required to give one week's notice if they want to leave or extend their homestay, and homestay families are expected to provide at least one week's notice should they require students to move.*

### **Extending your time with your homestay**

If you would like to extend your time with your host family, please discuss this with them first to make sure that they are happy to do this, that they do not have other arrangements and that the room is available. You then have to let the Accommodation and Pastoral Care Coordinator know that you will be extending your homestay and how long for, and visit the Enrolments and Homestay office to pay for this. Please note that there is a 2% surcharge on all credit card payments.

### **Changing homestays**

We are not able to change your homestay accommodation once it is booked unless the accommodation host is negligent, or the homestay family finds the student disruptive. If you have a problem with your host, it can often be because of a small misunderstanding (language or cultural). Please try to communicate with your homestay family to solve any problems arising.

If your homestay family is negligent in terms of misconduct or improper behaviour, or is unable to provide you with adequate accommodation as explained in this document, then please get in touch with the ELA Homestay team and we will arrange other accommodation for you immediately.



## **PRIVACY POLICY**

The ELA stores all information provided by students securely, with only authorised employees having access to personal details. We will not disclose any information about students to other parties without consent, and endeavour to keep all personal information secure. If for any reason you need to contact another student or host family, please approach the Accommodation and Pastoral Care Coordinator.

## **CONTACT THE ELA HOMESTAY TEAM**

The Accommodation and Pastoral Care Coordinator tries to match students with families that they are compatible with, and all students and families are monitored through feedback forms. However, if any problems do arise, please get in touch with us.

Support staff can be found in the Enrolments and Homestay office at the ELA on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of 67 Symonds Street, or you can get in touch with Joanna Luo, the Accommodation and Pastoral Care Coordinator, at [jluo@ela.auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jluo@ela.auckland.ac.nz) or [accommodation@ela.auckland.ac.nz](mailto:accommodation@ela.auckland.ac.nz).

Please see the accommodation section of the ELA website for a copy of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

## **ELA EMERGENCY CONTACT**

0800 864 737 (NZ only)

+64 27 230 9782 (Mobile)