Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **As a homestay provider, am I the guardian of the student while they are in Australia?**

   No, Education Queensland International takes on the responsibility for the student’s welfare in order for the student to get a student visa from Immigration. Therefore, the school as a representative of EQI, is the legal guardian of the student and is responsible for the welfare of the student while they are on the student visa. The responsibility of the homestay provider is clearly stated in the Code of Conduct and as stated in point 2 below. The school has the ultimate authority with regards to the student’s wellbeing.

   In addition, the visa the student receives from Immigration and Border Protection carries strict criteria which the student has to meet to remain living in Australia. These criteria are monitored by the school and include things like no drinking alcohol, no smoking of cigarettes, taking illegal drugs, no travelling alone, 100% attendance at school, satisfactory academic results. The school, while the student is on the study visa, has the final say in the activities the student undertakes, not the home stay parent, the agent or the natural parent.

2. **What is expected of me as a homestay provider?**

   - The homestay provider is expected to ensure that the student follows all school rules including attending school every day, achieving satisfactory results and following rules such as only having sleepovers if forms have been filled out and travel forms when the occasion arises.

   - The host family is expected to communicate with the ISP Manager whenever something out of the ordinary occurs e.g. Sleepover arrangements over a weekend when there is no form filled out; evacuating from a home during a natural disaster; taking the student on a camping trip outside the Cairns area.

   - The homestay family is expected to provide a clean, comfortable room for the student. The room is not to be shared with anyone else. The minimum requirements are: bed/desk/cupboard/chair/lamp/fan or air con.

   - The host family is to provide the student with 3 meals a day, one of which must be a sit down meal with the family (usually at night).

   - The family is expected to treat the student like a member of the family, include him/her in family outings, set chores for the student to do and allow him to have friends over.

   - The family is expected to familiarise the student with his/her new surroundings, i.e. explain bus routes, take the student to purchase the mobile phone and give a general orientation of the area.
area in which the student will be staying. The family is not expected to be the student’s taxi, ferrying him/her back and forth to social engagements. However, in saying this, the homestay family is expected to help the student if he/she is stranded because the buses aren’t running or is unable to get home because of any other reason.

- The family is to issue the student with a key to gain access to the home as soon as he/she arrives.

3. How will I know who to contact at the school with regards to any issues/questions I might have about the student I am hosting?

As a general rule, the Homestay Coordinator is your first point of contact for any issues or questions. Her work number is 4039 9256.

4. How much money will I receive each week?

You will receive $272.00 a week. Along with this payment is the expectation that you, as the homestay family, will ensure that the student follows all school rules, both in and out of school and keep in regular contact with the Homestay Coordinator. Communication between you and the Homestay Coordinator is vitally important to ensure that the student’s stay remains a happy, positive experience for all concerned.

5. How often will I get paid?

You will be paid one week in arrears and one week in advance. The payments will be made every fortnight, usually on a Friday. If there are any changes to this schedule, the homestay coordinator will email you the details.

6. If I host students from other places in Cairns, do I have to notify Redlynch State College?

Yes, please! As we are responsible for the student’s welfare at all times, we need to know when you are having visitors to stay or having other students/nationalities staying in your home. We would expect to be notified out of courtesy anyway. I am sure as a parent you would, at all times, wish to know with whom your child was living in a house. Please note that we don’t allow homestay families to host more than two students at a time. If you do, there are tax implications. In addition, some of the students’ agents like to be informed if other nationalities are going to be sharing a home with their student and we need to let them know in advance if this is taking place.

If you are planning on hosting other students, please contact the Homestay Coordinator.

7. Am I expected to pick the student up at the airport when he/she first arrives in Australia and when he/she leaves Australia?

Yes, the family is expected to meet the student at the airport when the student first arrives in Australia.

The family is also expected to take their student to the airport when the student leaves Australia. The family is expected to stay with the student while he/she checks in to make sure there are no problems.
8. During the student’s first few days here, what is expected of me as a homestay parent?

- Make sure the student has made contact with his/her parents so that they know he/she has arrived safely.
- Sit down with the student and go through the forms for you to fill out and sign. There will be some forms the student will need to fill out and sign. These have already been emailed to you. Please ask the student to read the International Student Code of Conduct carefully so he/she knows what is expected of him/her whilst in Australia.
- Go through your house rules with the student, discuss curfews and any household chores you may wish the student to undertake.
- Familiarise the student with their neighbourhood, show him/her how to get to and from school, where his/her closest shopping centre is, how to catch buses etc.
- Remind him/her to bring his/her passport and any visa letters to school on his/her first day.
- Make sure they have the correct shoes for school according to the uniform policy. Uniform Policy is on the web site: www.redlynchsc.eq.edu.au
- Help him/her to buy his/her mobile phone.
- Drop your student off at school on his/her first day and pick him/her up after school has finished on the first day.

9. What do I do if the student is unwell and cannot come to school?

The family is expected to contact the ISP Manager if the student is sick and is too unwell to attend school.

A student can be ill for one day without a doctor’s certificate. If he/she takes off 2 or more days sick, a doctor’s certificate is required.

10. The student has an overseas health care card. How does this work? Does this allow the student to see a doctor for free?

The Overseas Health Care Card allows the student to be reimbursed for the cost of any medical expenses. However, the student still has to pay any doctor or medical professional up front, in cash, and then claim the expenses back from Allianz. Students are encouraged to download the My OSHC Assistant App. This App allows them to submit claims quickly and easily. If the students still need help they should bring their receipts to ISP Coordinator and he will complete the paperwork and send it off for them. Allianz will not pay the student out in cash, they will require an Australian bank account number to deposit the claim into.

If the student is sick and goes to see a doctor, please remind him/her to either take his/her credit card or cash to pay for the appointment. He/she will then be given a receipt which will be needed to claim a reimbursement. **However, at CENTRAL PLAZA DOCTORS, no gap fee will apply.** Their address is 60 McLeod Street and phone is: 4046 8600. This might be the easiest option for the students.
11. **If the student needs a doctor, do I have to take him/her to see one? Which one would I use?**

Please take the student to see a doctor if that is what the student requires. You can take him/her to your family doctor or Central Plaza Doctors as stated above.

12. **Am I expected to set curfews for the student when he/she lives with me? If yes, what times?**

EQI and the school has the expectation that on a Saturday night a student under the age of 15 will be home by 10pm and a student over the age of 15 will be home by 10.30pm. Weekdays, the student should be home by dark or at least by the time you serve dinner. If the student has a special request, please run it by the ISP Manager before giving permission.

In addition, if a student comes home in the early hours of the morning without permission, please contact the ISP Manager/Homestay Coordinator immediately so it can be addressed.

Please note that these curfew times are consistent with what other schools allow, however, if they do not suit your family please let your student know upfront of what the curfew times are and the school will also support the family with their curfew times.

13. **What situations would warrant a phone call to an IS member of staff?**

A homestay parent would contact a member of the IS Department when:

- **A student has a medical condition.** Even if the student says it is not that serious, we still require a phone call or email. Even if it is a small injury, we might need it to be checked out by a doctor to ensure that there is nothing underlying that could cause problems later on. If it occurred at school, we have incident reports that we have to fill out e.g. a student falling and hurting his shoulder whilst on a school excursion. The student might say it is not serious, but please call one of the IS Department team anyway.

Illnesses such as flu/chest infections are not required to be reported to the IS Department unless the student is going to be away sick for more than a day. However, if the student is unwell for a day and taking a day off school as a result, you will still need to contact the ISP Manager to report the student as not attending school that day due to illness.

- **A student has been in trouble with police or with the Liquor Licensing Board.** (Even if the student hasn’t been charged by the police, we still need to know about the situation).

- **Anything out of the ordinary that occurs, needs to be reported to the IS Department.** For example, if you find a student going through your drawers in your home, please call us.
  
  If you smell alcohol, cigarettes or think the student might be taking drugs, please call us.

- **If a student wishes to take a day off school for an important appointment, please make contact with the IS Department first to ensure that the school gives the student permission to take the time off.** Please don’t allow the student to take the time off and then tell us later.
• **If you have concerns** for a student other than the student you are hosting, please call us. All information received is treated confidentially and will never be passed onto a third party.

• If your student breaks something in your home, either by accident or wilfully.

**Other issues that are non urgent but require a call to the IS Department include:**

When the student is not eating properly or eating too much in the home.

If the student is not coming out of his/her bedroom and interacting with you and your family.

If the student is not helping around the house, leaving a messy bedroom or not complying with house rules.

If the student is staying awake until the early hours of the morning talking to family and friends overseas on skype.

*A general rule of thumb is, if you are unsure, call us anyway.* The IS Department would rather hear from you than not. In addition, please call us as soon as the situation arises, rather than a week or two later as this creates complications for the student, the school and the homestay family.

14. **Can a student have a sleepover at another student’s home?**

International students can only have a sleepover at someone else’s home if they have filled out a Travel and Activities form, it has been handed to the International student team and has been approved by the Principal. This form needs to be filled out by the student, signed by the homestay parent and the homestay parent is required to phone the family concerned to make sure that the student will be appropriately supervised for the night. This form must be submitted at least 3 days prior to the sleepover for approval by the Principal.

Once the student has filled out a sleepover form with one family, they do not need to fill out the form again for that *same* family and they can have as many sleepovers as they wish with that family.

*If the student has a spur-of-the-moment invitation for a sleepover, the student’s homestay family must contact the ISP Manager to find out whether or not it is okay for the student to have the sleepover. If the ISP Manager approves the sleepover, the student must then bring the sleepover form to the ISP Manager on the Monday after the event. This, however, must not be a regular occurrence.*

15. **Can students travel around Australia on their own?**

No, students cannot travel anywhere on their own. They are not allowed to stay in hotels on their own, they must be accompanied by an adult who is 21 years and older. At no stage is a student allowed to stay at a backpacker’s regardless who accompanies them.

16. **If a student wishes to go on an organised EQI approved tour or go interstate to visit family, do they have to fill out a form?**
Yes. They must fill out a Travel and Activities form which has to be signed by the homestay parent, returned to the school to be sent to their agent for their parents to approve and then the Principal of our school has the final approval as to whether the student can travel or not.

17. **If a student wishes to go camping or travel outside Cairns with YOUR family, do they have to fill out a form?**

Yes, they have to fill out the Travel and Activities form as well and we have to follow the same procedure with the Principal of our school being the person to decide whether the student goes on the outing or not.

18. **If a student wishes to go camping or travel to another city with another homestay family and their student, do they have to fill out a form?**

Yes, they have to fill out the Travel and Activities form as well and we have to follow the same procedure with the Principal of our school being the person to decide whether the student goes on the outing or not.

19. **If a student’s parents give them permission to travel, can they?**

No, Education Queensland International takes on the responsibility for the student’s welfare in order for the student to get a student visa from Immigration. Therefore, the school as a representative of EQI is responsible for the welfare of the student. While the student is on the study visa, the school Principal has the final say in the activities the student undertakes, not the natural parent.

20. **Am I allowed to enter the student’s room at any time?**

No. The student’s room is the student’s private space and at no stage is the host family allowed to enter the room without the student’s permission.

21. **What do I do if the student refuses to keep his/her room clean and tidy?**

The student is expected to follow a Code of Conduct which he/she receives on arrival at the school. Initially, speak to the student about the expectations you have in your home about cleanliness etc. Contact the Homestay Coordinator so that she is aware of the situation in the home. If the student refuses to comply with your request, the ISP Manager will speak to the student.

22. **What do I do if the student stays in his/her room, only coming out for meals?**

The student has come to Australia to learn more about the Australian culture and to improve their English. The student is expected to interact with your family and also assist with chores in the home. Speak to the student about their behaviour and contact any member of the IS Department about it as well. If things don’t improve, make contact with the ISP Manager and they will talk to the student about the expectations within the homestay family.

23. **The student is expected to purchase a mobile phone when they are arrive here, why is that?**
The school must be able to contact the student at any time. Although phones are not to be turned on during school hours, the student is expected to be contactable at any time of the day or night (outside of school hours) by any member of the International Student department and the homestay family. This is an important rule that we ask the homestay family to make sure the student complies with.

It is vitally important that you inform the school if the student changes his/her mobile phone number. You can contact the ISP Manager with the new number.

24. **What do I do if my student just stays in his/her bedroom on the computer, doesn’t seem to have any friends and doesn’t want to explore their new environment?**

Initially, we would ask you to make suggestions for activities the student could do and also encourage him/her to join you and your family in household activities as he/she might be shy and find it hard adapting to a new environment. Sometimes, however, the student simply likes his/her own company and prefers to remain in their room over weekends, watching videos and playing on the computer. We don’t often find that the international students do this but we might get one or two who are like this, please don’t be alarmed. If you are really concerned about the reclusive nature of the student, please contact the ISP Manager with your concerns.

25. **Am I expected to take my student sightseeing around Cairns?**

As part of the payment you receive from the school for housing the student, there is an expectation that the host family will show the student some of our beautiful surroundings. We would expect the student would be taken on at least 3 outings (day trips) during their 3 month stay here to places such as the Tablelands, Kuranda, Port Douglas and if they are here longer, perhaps then further afield, to Innisfail/Mission Beach/Paronella Park. Camping with their host family is also a wonderful experience for the students.

26. **If my student wishes to undertake recreational, out of school activities, such as sport/music etc. am I expected to transport them to these activities?**

Yes, please. The school would appreciate it if the homestay family assists where possible to ensure that the student can enjoy sporting/cultural activities. Obviously, they must fit in with the homestay family timetable and not be at inappropriate night times.

27. **The Homestay Code of Conduct says the homestay family must assist and support the student with regards to completion of homework and also assist them to achieve satisfactory results, what does this entail from a homestay parent point of view?**

The homestay family is asked to attend any school interviews that might be arranged to discuss the student’s academic results. These usually occur after the reports have been distributed and interviews are only required if the student is not achieving his/her best.

If a homestay parent notices that the student is not completing homework or seems to be struggling with schoolwork, it would be very much appreciated if contact could be made with the IS Coordinator so that he can follow up with student and assist the student to maintain the satisfactory results that are required as part of his/her visa requirements.
28. What if the student uses all our internet data allocation and/or is on the computer all the time over weekends etc.?

The students coming over from Europe and Asia are used to having unlimited internet. Therefore, it is a good idea when the student first arrives to explain to him/her that Australians have to purchase their internet data and, therefore, it cannot be used all day, every day. The internet is great for keeping in touch with family and friends but downloading movies which use up a lot of memory is now allowed.

If the internet usage in your home continues to be a problem, please contact a member of the IS Department. We will talk to the student about this.

29. What do we do if we want to go away for a week during term time and cannot take the student with us because they have to attend school?

We prefer that you do not make arrangements to be away when you are hosting a student, however, we realise that emergencies do arise. In this case, please make contact with the Homestay Coordinator so that she can arrange a different homestay family for the student. Please don’t leave it until the week before you go away to let the Homestay Coordinator know as it takes time to find new homestay families for a student.

Also, please don’t arrange an alternate homestay placement for the student yourself. We have strict criteria which we must follow when placing a student with a family. We cannot just place them with your next door neighbour.

30. What do I need to do if our personal details change?

Please make contact with the Homestay Coordinator as soon as the details change and inform her of the changes so she has an up-to-date record of your contact details.

31. Can I invite my international student’s parents to stay if they come over to Australia?

The school would prefer it if homestay families did not invite their international student’s parents to stay with them as sometimes issues can arise and cause problems. If a homestay family really would like to offer this to a family, then a couple of days are fine but anything longer than that, is not condoned. The school would prefer it if student’s parents made accommodation arrangements on their own accord. We would also prefer it if homestay families did not offer their empty home to an international student and their family whilst the student is still under the care of the school.

32. My student would like to go bungee jumping at AJ Hackett. Is he/she allowed to?

Under EQI policy, international students are not allowed to undertake the following high risk activities unless they are offered as part of a school excursion: abseiling, bungee jumping, caving, canoeing, hang gliding, jet skiing, motorcycling, mountain climbing, parachuting, parasailing, racing (other than on foot), rock and/or mountain climbing, shark-cage diving, sky diving, white water rafting and ocean yachting.

33. My student wants to work whilst in Australia, is he/she allowed to?
Yes, your student is allowed to work but must come and see the ISP Manager before work commences so that we can make a note in the student’s file that he/she is working.

33. **My student wishes to learn to drive a car whilst here in Australia. Is he/she allowed to?**

Yes, the student can learn to drive but only with a professional driving school instructor. Once they have received their licence they are then able to drive a vehicle in Australia. Students may only drive on an Australian licence whilst in Australia.

34. **Can the school remove a student from a homestay family without giving any notice to the family?**

Yes, under Item no. 10 of the Homestay Code of Conduct, if there is a serious incident, complaint or emergency involving the student, the school can remove the student from the homestay family with immediate effect.

35. **What do I do if my blue card is about to expire?**

Contact the Homestay Coordinator to have the current forms forwarded to you. The forms change every year, so don’t assume that what you filled out previously is what the Blue Card Services expects you to fill out now.

36. **If my child turns 18 when we are hosting a student, does he/she need a blue card?**

Yes, please contact the Homestay Coordinator for her to send you the correct forms at least 3 months prior to the birth day.

37. **If I have visitors staying with me when I host a student, do they require blue cards?**

If your visitors are staying for more than 10 days then blue cards are required. Please contact the Homestay Coordinator for the correct forms to be sent to you.

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