

JCUELC



HOMESTAY FAMILY AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

This booklet has been put together to help provide information for students and homestay families.

Homestay is a very important part of our English Language courses. Homestay families provide you the opportunity to experience life with an Australian family and practice your English skills. Homestay families are carefully selected and matched up with you to ensure you have the best possible experience.

Your homestay family will meet you at the airport and help you to settle into life in Cairns/Townsville and Australia.

About JCUELC

JCUELC was established by the University in 2003 to assist international students gain the required English skills to enrol in a degree course. The centre expanded into providing other English course.

In January 2007 Kings International College took over the ownership and management of the Centre. The centre has expanded to meet the needs and now caters for many English programs including Study Tours, High School Preparation Programs and University Preparation courses. JCUELC is accredited by NEAS Australia and is a registered CRICOS Provider. Complying with strict legislation ensures we provide a quality service to our international students.

Roles and responsibilities

In order for the homestay to run smoothly, special conditions have been set out to assist.

Role of JCUELC

- Provide quality English language courses
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Fulfill obligations regarding immigration notification of changes or breaches of study visa conditions of student
- Provide student support services
- Places and monitors student in homestay

The Role of the Homestay Family

The role of a Homestay family has been explained in this way: parent, friend, adviser, confidante, disciplinarian, supervisor of homework, intermediary with our school. Perhaps the term "parent" sums it all up.

We emphasise the importance of the whole family being involved in supplying a warm, supportive, welcoming environment. Children can become very resentful at the intrusion of an outsider into their family circle, and every effort needs to be made to encourage children to be giving, sensitive to the needs of others, and eager to learn about another culture.

2. It is important that family members take time to chat with the visiting student and take an interest in that student's activities.
3. There is a need for great sensitivity where a student may well be exhausted from the effort of communicating in English. Be aware that it is exhausting, but do not make this an excuse for not communicating or allowing your student to remain alone in the bedroom for long periods of time.

4. The family must not see Homestay as a commercial venture upon which they rely as a regular source of income.
5. We encourage families to have a break in the year from hosting students. This ensures that they are able to continue to host future students appropriately and enthusiastically.
6. Unforeseen difficulties may arise, such as a clash of personalities. If so,
 - Attempt to deal with them openly.
 - If the situation worsens, do not hesitate to discuss problems or issues with the Director of Studies who will be monitoring the progress of placements.
 - Occasionally there is simply a mismatch of student to Host Family. In such a case, no blame attaches to anyone, and a solution is found which is acceptable to all parties.
8. Above all, **relax and enjoy having a new family member**. If you treat your host son or daughter as you would treat your own children everyone will be happy.

Requirements of the familymust do list!!!!

1. If your student is not going to be at school by 8.30am for any reason, you must telephone the school before 9:00 am
2. Everyone in the family over the age of 18yrs must hold a Blue Card
3. Ensure that your student is satisfied with the amount of food offered to them daily – a minimum of three meals a day with appropriate snacks
4. Make sure that they drink plenty of water especially when they first arrive as they are acclimatizing Please provide a water bottle.
5. You must inform JCUELC of any changes in your living arrangements eg contact details.

Department of Immigration rules for students on a student Visa (Diac)

- WORKING VISA and HOURS
- ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL
- ACADEMIC RESULTS

The Student Visa is at risk if any of the above areas are breached.

- The most important of these is the need to attend school regularly and most definitely at least 90 % of the scheduled school days.
- There will be a letter sent from the school to the Host family requesting an interview with the Director of Studies if the attendance drops to the crucial level of 90%.

The above areas are most important and Host Families are asked to keep these areas in mind when assisting their International Student with any arrangements. Please speak with the Director of Studies regarding any questions you have on these important issues

Blue Card requirements

1. From 1 January 2006, all Host Family members over the age of 18 yrs are required to hold a **CURRENT BLUE CARD**.

What host families need to provide;

Their room

- Their own bedroom with a study desk and lamp
- Comfortable bed Asian students are accustomed to very firm mattresses, so talk with them about this
- Cupboard space including hanging
- Sheets, towels and bedcovers
- Screened room or mosquito net provided

Internet access

- JCUELC would see it as an advantage if the student has internet and computer access.
- If you do not have internet access you must be prepared to discuss connection if the student requires this. This will be particularly important for long term students.

Study assistance

- Assist your student to set a realistic study plan
- Ensure that they have a balanced lifestyle
- Be aware that sometimes there will be late nights and early mornings

Household chores

It is appropriate for students to help with normal household chores

- Washing up, cleaning their bathroom.
- Keeping their own bedroom neat and tidy.
- Have daily and weekly checks that are their responsibility.

Transport responsibilities

- Host families are expected to initially assist students with transport arrangements so that they can take full advantage of school and leisure activities. If you feel your student is ready to take the bus please discuss with the Director of Studies of JCUELC. Host family payment includes transport to school. Please consider this when determining how students will get to and from school.
- At least one adult at the premises must have a current driver's licence.

Bus travel

JCUELC is serviced by Sunbus. It is the responsibility of the host family to contact the bus company and find out about bus routes, fares, times and connections where necessary. Students pay the normal student fare on buses. Further details regarding timetables, fares and eligibility can be obtained from the relevant bus company.

Sunbus Service Ph: 40 577 411 www.sunbus.com.au

Cars

Students who hold a Queensland Transport driver's licence may drive to school.

When your student arrives

There will be a lot of excitement (and a little nervous tension) on the day students arrive. Students will be very tired, possibly suffering jet lag and culture shock. Some students may like to keep the

first day fairly quiet, and to have limited information. Others will want to see everything to gain a sense of belonging.

- Take the student to their room, so that they feel they have a base where they belong.
- Make sure the student is comfortable with the names of family members and has a name to use when addressing you, the Host Parents.
- Introduce the family pets and be aware of the fact that some overseas students may not be used to animals in such close proximity.
- If you know your student has very little English, try putting signs on doors and cupboards to help students learn more.
- A written program outlining the weekly family routine would help. Include waking time, meal times, time to leave home for school, weekend routine (or absence of weekend routine), washing days and times.
- Demonstrate to students how to use both toilet and shower. Students may not be used to having a toilet bowl, for example.
- Washing in some countries consists of splashing water from a kind of open tank over the body, soaping down, then rinsing off the same fashion. The bathroom floor gets very wet.
- If you live with only tank water and a septic tank, you will have to lay down strict rules for time under the shower. You will also need to make adequate and discrete provision for the disposal of sanitary napkins.
- Take your host student on an orientation tour of the city of Cairns and its environs. Take this opportunity to point out facilities such as
 - Chemist shops
 - Banks
 - shopping facilities
 - Bus stops and
 - taxi ranks
- Assist them to set up the cheapest way of phoning home. Students should purchase a prepaid phone card for international calls which enables them to call at normal local call cost to the host family. Cards are available from the local Post Office or Newsagent.

Communication

Smiles are universal – a great deal can be said with a smile, a gesture. There is a whole body language which suggests relaxation, warmth and welcome.

- On arrival students may appear to have very little knowledge of English. This is for two reasons:
 1. They have often had more exposure to the rules of the English Grammar than to the spoken form of the language.
 2. They will find our accent and our idioms extremely difficult to understand.
- Use simple English, short sentences. Speak slowly and clearly. Stress key words. Avoid Australian idioms and slang and explain the expression you use. Do not hesitate to repeat or rephrase.
- Do not go into long explanations.
- Do not use broken English. Your student has learned Standard English structures and will not recognise your attempts to speak like a foreigner.
- Do not shout or speak louder than usual. Your student has a problem of comprehension, not of hearing.

- If verbal communication is not helpful, try pen and paper. Your student will probably have a better chance of recognising the written word.
- Avoid negative questions. If you ask "Don't you like beetroot?" your student will probably answer "yes", when in reality he/she hates beetroot with a vengeance. (Most International Students do!).
- Be aware that body language differs from culture to culture for example, beckoning with the forefinger may be quite offensive. Eye contact with a superior may be considered impolite. Just ask about these gestures before you use them.
- Australians have become very tactile people. We like to hug, and touch. For people from some cultures this may be highly offensive. Keep a distance until you can discuss such issues. Touching of female students by male family members can be traumatic. Again, do not do it until the whole issue can be discussed.

Telephone

- Do you expect your student to pay for use of the phone? Please discuss this with your student
- You may like to have a moneybox near the phone or simply a pad to record telephone numbers dialed.
- Explain the area covered by local calls for Cairns and the relevant cost
- There may be times when your student is required to answer the phone. Explain how you want this done and how you want messages taken.

Food

Questions to Ask

- What is their favourite food?
- Would they like to cook a meal or a snack for the family?
- How much would they like on their plate? Do not assume serving sizes.

Suggestions!!!!

- Get them to experiment with their own lunch making.
- Cook what you would normally serve to your family.
- Invite them to go shopping with you.
- Be sensitive to the fact that what we eat, the way we prepare it and the way we eat. it may be very strange and even unpleasant to your student.
- Hand over the kitchen to your student once in a while.
- **OWN A RICE COOKER** – if your student is of Asian origin.
- Place everything in serving dishes in the middle of the table.
- Make takeaway a special treat.
- Patience, Patience, Patience.

What about friends?

- Instruct them on the protocol of inviting over their friends. You may want to facilitate the first occasion.
- Since we are dealing with young adults, we will inevitably meet that universal miracle known as "falling in love".
- Encourage your student to go out with a group of friends and so avoid the issue of dating.
- A shared language and culture will often mean that your student's best friend is from his/her own country.
- It is really beneficial in time of trauma or distress for your student to be able to seek counsel from someone who shares language and culture.

Medical details form

JCUELC will have on file the student medical details and when necessary JCUELC will provide this information.

What do I do if my student gets sick?

1. Treat your student as you would treat a member of your own family.
2. Remember that psychosomatic symptoms may appear at various times during their visit – usually at the beginning, middle and end. These are brought on by stress, homesickness, sense of rejection by family (in some cases) and other emotional difficulties of the away from home experience.
3. Usually it is not difficult to distinguish a genuine physical ailment from an emotional disorder. **If in doubt, consult a doctor.**

Students on student visas will be issued with a Private Health Insurance Card (AHM Overseas Health Cover), which functions in much the same way as a Medicare card. This Card covers 85% from Doctors and 100% Hospital basic medical expenses. If the student pays cash at the time of consultation or treatment, a refund can be obtained immediately by going to a AHM office. The alternative is to fill in a form and apply for a refund by cheque. The form is available on the website. www.ahm.com.au/oshc and also at the reception area.

1. Queensland Ambulance Fees are covered.
2. At the beginning of the stay, students often have upset stomachs and headaches as they adjust to our food and water.
3. In the event of emergency surgery only, the Host Parents will need to sign the necessary permission forms on behalf of JCUELC.
4. Where time and circumstance permits, permission is obtained from the student's parents by JCUELC.

Legal and household Insurance:

Please check that your household and contents insurance are up to date for your public liability cover. If a student loses any of their possessions through fire, theft or cyclone, it should be covered by their own travel insurance and not your household insurance.

It is a good idea to check with your Insurance Agent as to what your student can and cannot do. You may find that some activities which you might like to do with your student such as abseiling, parachuting, mountaineering or even 4 Wheel Driving are not allowed under the terms of the insurance policy.

Religion

- Your student may have religious observances that you need to respect.
- Discuss the matter as openly as their language level will allow.
- Some non Christian students like to go to church for the cultural or social experience.

- Joining a Church Youth Group may be a way for your student to learn more about Christianity and also to meet other students.

Students and their finances

1. Assist your student to open a bank account in the early weeks of their stay
2. A passport can also be used to open a bank account provided the student does this within the first four weeks of arriving in Australia. Ask the student to keep their boarding pass as this provides evidence on the arrival date.
3. Warn your student not to carry large sums of money as this is not a safe practice.

What do I do with my student's passport or visa?

1. Ensure that these are kept in a safe place and that both you and the student are aware of where they are.
2. You may like to check that the dates correspond with the proposed length of stay.

Note: We also understand that as homestay families you may have other conditions that you may need to include when talking with your student. Please make sure that both parties are in agreement to further conditions.

What is the role of the student to ensure the success of the home stay experience?

Where are you?

1. For safety reasons you should ensure the Host Family knows your whereabouts at all times and the time when you will return home from school or visits that you may make at the weekend.
2. If you are unavoidably delayed, you are expected to telephone the Host Family with your new arrival time and any other details, including an apology for any inconvenience caused.

Department of immigration rules for students on a student's visa

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- ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL
- ACADEMIC RESULTS
- WORKING VISA and HOURS

The Student Visa is at risk if any of the above areas are breached.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

- The most important of these is the need to attend school regularly and most definitely at least 90 % of the scheduled school days.
- If you are sick, a medical certificate is to be given to the school on your return, even if it is for one day.

- There will be a letter sent from the school to the Host family requesting an interview with the Director of Studies if your attendance drops to the crucial level of 90%.

Academic Progress

- Students who are enrolled at JCUELC are engaged in a program of full time study. Progress is assessed through internal assessment
- All students are required to complete the program of assessment.
- Satisfactory progress is defined as genuine engagement in the program of study as evidenced by attendance, completion of assignment and testing. It is further evidenced by engagement in the opportunities offered to students through the coaching and ESL support classes.
- The first line of support for students who encounter difficulties in making progress will be the Director of Studies. In situations where students are not engaged in the program of study and who do not respond to the support offered, cancellation of enrolment will follow. This decision will only be taken after all avenues of support (including work with parents) have been exhausted

Living arrangements and Details

- You must inform JCUELC of any changes in your living arrangements
- It is your responsibility to keep the school informed of accurate up-to-date personal contact details, including changes in your mobile phone number. This is to comply with Commonwealth Government legislation developed to protect overseas students.

Internet access

- If you do not have internet access you must be prepared to discuss connection with your Home stay family especially the download capacity and any additional costs.
- You must not access the internet after 10.00pm unless your Homestay family agrees to this.

Household chores

It is appropriate for you to help with normal household chores, below are some suggestions;

- Washing up, clean your bathroom.
- Keeping your own bedroom neat and tidy.
- Turn off lights and fans
- Vacuuming the home
- Put out the rubbish bin and bring in
- Lock doors when your are leaving the home
- Help with washing and folding of clothes
- Have daily and weekly tasks that are your responsibility.

Transport responsibilities

- Host families are expected to initially assist you with transport arrangements so that you can take full advantage of school and leisure activities.

Bus travel

JCUELC is serviced by the Sunbus it is the responsibility of the host family to contact the bus company to find out about bus routes, fares, times and connections where necessary.

Students pay the normal student fare on buses. Further details regarding fares and timetable can be obtained from Sunbus.

Phone: 40 577 411

Web: www.sunbus.com.au

Cars

Students who hold a Queensland Transport drivers licence may drive to school.

Telephone

- Discuss with your host family what they require for payment of phone calls both International and Local.
- Ask your host family how they would like the phone answered.

My Medical details form

You are required to fill in the medical detail form and return this to JCUELC prior to arrival. When necessary your medical information may be provided to your Homestay family.

What do I do if I get sick?

Speak with your family so that they are aware of your situation.

You will be issued with a Overseas Health Insurance Card (AHM), which functions in much the same way as a Medicare card. This Card covers around 85% of basic medical expenses. You pay cash at the time of consultation or treatment; a refund can be obtained immediately by going to a Medibank Private office. The alternative is to fill in a form and apply for a refund by cheque. The form is available on the website.

Queensland Ambulance Fees are covered.

In the event of **emergency surgery** only, the Host Parents will need to sign the necessary permission forms on behalf of JCUELC. Where time and circumstance permits, permission is obtained from the student's parents by JCUELC.

Legal and Household Insurance

It is a good idea to check your travel insurance cover for loss of your belongings. Make sure that you ask if the cover is for both inside the family home and away from it.

Religion

Discuss your religious interests and matters openly to assist your family to understand your needs.

Students and Their Finances

- Ask your Home stay family to assist you to open a bank account as early as possible

- Remember to take your passport as a means of identification and this has to be done within the first four weeks of arriving in Australia. Please keep your boarding pass as this provides evidence on the arrival date.
- Do not carry large sums of money as this is not a safe practice

What do I do with my Passport or Visa?

- Ensure that these are kept in a safe place
- Check that your passport and student visa are up to date

Visitors

1. Before inviting visitors to your Host Family's home, you must first check that such a visit is acceptable to the Host Family. This needs to be done at least one day beforehand, and not as a surprise visit.
2. Please do not ask your Host Family to accommodate any of your guests that may come to visit you from overseas. It is a guideline of the school that if your family or friends are visiting, you find them alternative accommodation for their stay.

House Rules

1. You must abide by the House Rules at all times and use your common sense to deal with unexpected events.
2. Every day you should ensure your room is clean and tidy and that your bed is made.
3. Respect for the Host Family and their possessions is essential and all care must be taken when using the Host Family's furniture and goods.
4. It is essential to ensure that keys provided by the Host Family are kept safe at all times. Keys must be returned before your final departure date
5. Please discuss with your Host Family the use of water in Australia as there are very strict rules in regard to this.

Communication

1. **Communicate quickly** with your Host Family about any of the issues that may concern you, no matter how small they may seem.
2. International Students are encouraged to become involved in family life and be an active member of their Host Family. Meal times are an excellent time to engage in conversation and find out more about Australia and the Australian way of life.
3. To assist with the smooth running of the household, you must keep the Host Family fully informed of coming events and planned absences, such as holidays.
4. When in doubt about anything to do with the running of the Host Family's household, you must ask what should be done or what you can do to help.
5. Come prepared to talk about what is special about your "home place". Please feel free to bring photos of your home and family to show your Host family.

Food

1. You have a responsibility to inform your Host Family of any special food requirements you may have.
2. Go with your Host Family when grocery shopping is being done.

Legal stuff

Adhere to all aspects of the Australian law. **REMEMBER:**

- Wearing bicycle helmets is compulsory in Australia
- A Queensland Transport Driver's license is required if you drive.
- Respect the legal age of drinking and smoking.
- Illegal drug usage is not tolerated.

Students are expected to learn as much English as possible whilst living with the Host Family. To do this you will need to be positive in your attitude and approach this experience with enthusiasm. In reality many students will find it difficult to adjust to family life quickly and thus patience will be required from both parties.

The Role of JCUELC

STUDENT ID CARDS

Student ID Cards are available on your day of arrival. These cards are used for many ID purposes.

HOW DO I GET HELP AND SUPPORT?

- Depending on the problem or need, the school is the front line when it comes to offering support to Host Families.
- We are committed to respond to your enquiry within 24 hours.

Certificates

All students are provided with a certificate from JCUELC on the last day of studies.



Never feel that you are on your own. There are teams of people who value your efforts, and are here to offer you support.