Thank you for your willingness to provide our student with a caring environment in which they are encouraged to gain their full potential while studying in Australia. We hope that the student will be provided with a holistic experience that helps contribute to all areas of their development - academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual.

Hosting an International Student can help with this aim, as well as being a most rewarding experience for you and your family. Usually your student will join in all family activities and outings and you will benefit from learning about another culture. Your student guest will have a special relationship with you which can be a lifelong bond.

They will need the love and care that you would like your own child to receive in similar circumstances in another country.

Students at a homestay can expect you to provide them with the following:

- Their own door key (depending on their age)
- Breakfast & dinner every day (3 meals a day on weekends & public holidays). You may provide a cut lunch for school days or some days they might purchase their lunch from the Tuckshop
- Own bedroom which the student can feel is private
- A comfortable bed, warm blankets and regular linen changes
- Wardrobe, study table & chair and desk lamp
- Heater in winter and fan or air conditioning in summer
- Laundry done by the homestay family

**WHEN YOUR STUDENT ARRIVES:**

Let your student know immediately what you expect to be called. We recommend in most situations that a first name basis may be best.

Very soon after your student arrives, take a quiet time together to chat to them about your expectations. Repeat the chat time regularly. Be clear and firm about your rules regarding:

- Meal times and the use of the kitchen
- Bed times
- Use of the bathroom
- Use of the telephone, television/dvd & sound system

Of course be reasonable in your demands taking into consideration the student’s age and maturity. Do not confront the student with all the rules immediately on arrival. Just make sure that as time goes on you and the student know where you stand and the basis on which you can live together in harmony.
The following are some guideline suggestions. Specifics will vary from family to family and student to student.

TELEPHONE CALLS
The student needs to pay for all STD and International Calls. This is most easily done using the statement of account from your telephone company. We recommend that you receive a monthly account.

MONEY
Please ensure your guests do not carry large amounts of cash with them. Advise them about how much money is appropriate to take to school ($5-$10) for Tuckshop lunch or snacks.

HELP WITH ENGLISH
Most students will have a good command of English. However, if your student does not, you can play a vital role in helping the student with practice. Try to converse as much as possible. Speak slowly and clearly and use simple English. You may need to repeat things and often rephrasing speech is helpful.

Be careful not to raise your voice when speaking assuming that speaking louder will increase their understanding. Students may often say they understand you to avoid embarrassment or because they desire to please. It is wise to check that they have really understood if it is something important.

You may sometimes find that students are reluctant to converse freely out of respect for your position as an older or senior person.

If your student speaks very little English and you have something vital to communicate, it could be wise to arrange a three-way conversation with an interpreter to ensure that the student understands.

In emergency situations the assistance of an interpreter must be sought.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS
If your student behaves in a way you find irritating or unacceptable, sort this out straight away. Also encourage the student to speak to you immediately if they find anything unacceptable or confusing. Do not expect students from different cultures to guess what is displeasing you.

Some areas that may lead to problems if guidelines are not clarified are as follows:

a. **Meals**: Students are expected to eat with your family. If they are not going to be home for a meal they need to advise you several hours beforehand.

b. **Students should let you know where they are**: If your students intend to stay away overnight you should insist on an address and contact telephone number.

c. **Smoking, alcohol & illegal drugs etc**: Make very clear statements about your policies in the home. Remind them that all these activities are unacceptable at any College function as well.
d. **Friends:** Students may wish to bring friends into your home. State your rules on visitors. Be reasonable. Perhaps suggest a time by which the friend should be out of the house by. Sometimes, like with your own children they may like a friend to stay over.

e. **Laundry:** Explain where you want it placed and how often it is done. Some students will request to do it themselves. If you agree that your student can do their own washing and ironing, show them how and where and discuss convenient times.

f. **Showering & Bathroom:** Students may be accustomed to long showers or sloshing large quantities of water around in the bathroom. Clearly state that in Australia, showers are for 5-10 minutes only and show how to clean up the bathroom when they are finished.

g. **Bedtime:** Many Australians go to bed ‘early’. Noise is not acceptable after a certain time. Set a reasonable time by which you expect radios etc to be turned off and the house to be quiet. You may also need to set an hour after which telephone calls should not be made or received. This is important where there is a substantial time zone difference and during day light savings.

h. **Bedroom:** Tell the student how you want their room maintained, sheets changed, heater off at bedtime etc. Tell students to sleep between the sheets. Note that it is likely that your guest will prefer a firm to hard bed rather than our ‘soft’ ones. Discuss that with them.

**TASKS AROUND THE HOME**
It is customary in Australia to expect people staying in your home to help with such things as setting the table, drying the dishes, etc. Your student may have come from a background of wealth with servants doing most ordinary things for them. Many students, particularly the males, will never have done any household chores at all.

Students cannot be compelled to do any chores but often are willing to offer to help if asked. We believe that you can say that as they are like members of your family, they should help. Point out that the meal preparation time or the washing up time is often an important social event in the family.

**DIET**
The food that students have been used to eating will generally be vastly different to what Aussies eat. In fact, adapting to the food can be the greatest single difficulty that students experience.

The degree to which you try and find what foods the students like and cater for this is up to you. Of course a student’s willingness to try different foods and the speed with which they acquire a whole new set of ‘taste buds’ will vary. Just do the best you can and we expect them to do the same.

**HEALTH**
Students are covered by Medical Health Insurance as part of their visa conditions but are responsible for their own prescriptions and other medicines.
The Overseas Health Cover (OSHC) should have been paid before your student guest came to Australia. The premium paid is linked to the duration of the student's visa.

If you feel that a student requires urgent medical attention, get them to the nearest hospital or doctor and sort out the payment arrangements later. At the end of the day students must pay for any additional expenses not covered by their OSHC.

**TRANSPORT**
It will be important to guide your guest in locating and catching buses, trains etc. Going with them at first is a good idea. Establish guidelines about you providing a personal ‘taxi’ service.

**CULTURE SHOCK**
Culture Shock occurs when people move from a culture in which they understand and can interpret the values, patterns of behaviour, gestures etc into a culture in which they do not know and understand these things.

People from different cultures are often concerned to preserve ‘face’ - both theirs and yours. This must not be considered lack of openness. Sometimes you may have to point out that your regard for your student is in no way diminished because you have to point something out to them that has displeased you. Where applicable explain that a problem may have arisen because of differing cultural backgrounds.

Never imply that the Australian culture is better. You will find most students keen to learn how we do things and are anxious to fit in.

Everyone experiences culture shock to a greater or lessor degree when they live in another country. Some of the symptoms of culture shock are:

- Homesickness - unexplainable fits of weeping
- Boredom or need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Hostility toward or withdrawal from Homestay family
- Compulsive eating or drinking
- Irritability
- Exaggerated cleanliness
- Inability to work or study effectively
- Physical ailments (menstruation problems etc)
- Psychosomatic illness

It is good to recognise too that your guest may be the first overseas culture experience your next door neighbours have experienced. It is wise to tell them in advance of the arrival of your student and it may be appropriate to introduce them as soon after they arrive.

**ASSISTING WITH SCHOOL WORK**
Your student will initially have a greater rapport with and confidence in you than their teachers. They may therefore seek (or need) your help with school work. Don’t be afraid to help, even if you can’t understand the content, as your student will mostly need help in interpreting English
words, clarifying meanings and applications etc. Encourage them to be open in this. Work hard at it because openness will often not be easy for them.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO ENTERTAIN
Your student has entered Homestay so they can get to know and enjoy hospitality. They expect to chat and practice English. We expect the student to be welcomed into the family and join in with an active Australian family lifestyle. This includes inviting the student with you on outings on which you would normally take your family. The student needs activity and would benefit from something each weekend. This activity need not necessarily be expensive. Tourist attractions, the waterfront, beaches, parks, lakes and shopping centres are all attractive places to share time with your student. They do not come to Australia only to spend all their leisure time watching television. Some students may be interested in sporting activities ie. soccer, PCYC, dancing, gym, netball etc. Try to encourage them in this area.

Students may be unused to paying for themselves on outings. Tell them that they should pay their own entry unless you have agreed beforehand to pay for them.

REMEMBER
Your student is far from home. They will at times be lonely. They will appreciate your warmth and sympathy. They are normal human beings with the normal problems all human beings have. Love, warmth and understanding will solve most problems.

If your student is entering a Christian home do not feel embarrassed about asking them to share in family devotions, grace at meal times etc. If they are not Christians, explain clearly what the purpose of the activity is, and its importance to you as Christians. Be careful not to condemn other religions - show sensitivity to your guests own beliefs and the values that their family may have instilled in them.

Of uttermost importance is that you demonstrate a spirit of friendship and understanding at all times - in the end, actions do speak louder than words.

CHECK LIST FOR CONTACT:
Mackay Christian College Office Hours are 8.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday
Phone: 4963 1100.

Please phone the Registrar, Mrs Catherine Petersen through the College Office during Office hours on 4963 1100 or 0408 709 707 after hours if:

- There has been an accident or an emergency
- There is an issue with the International Student being in your home
- There are concerns with communication with your International Student
- Concerns with payment for Homestay contribution