

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOMESTAY HANDBOOK



**SOUTH
WELLINGTON
INTERMEDIATE
SCHOOL**




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CONTACTS

SWIS International Coordinator
is Hayley Trenwith.

 international@swis.school.nz

 +64 4 939 9872

SWIS Principal is Brendon Henderson





WELCOME TO HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Tēnā koutou, Konnichiwa, As-salāmu 'alaykum, Hola.

Hosting an international student is a special opportunity to share your home, culture, and everyday life. These differences are what make the experience so rewarding for both your family and your student.

Our biggest rule of thumb for care of our international students is *“How would I want my own child to be treated in another country?”*

International students come to New Zealand to improve their English, experience a new culture, and grow in independence. For many, this is their first time away from home, so your support plays a vital role in their success.

He whānau kotahi tatou - We are one family

PREPARING TO HOST

Before your student arrives:

- read their profile (interests, allergies, preferences),
- learn a little about their culture,
- make contact with the student and their family if possible - video call or email,
- share information and photos of your home and family,
- get to know the SWIS International Student coordinator. They are your first point of contact for all homestay matters and are there to give you advice and support.

YOUR ROLE AS HOMESTAY FAMILY

As a host family, you agree to:

- welcome the student as part of your family,
- provide daily meals, a comfortable room, and daily care,
- include them in family life and activities,
- set clear, fair expectations and routines,
- stay in regular contact with the school.

You are responsible for your student's wellbeing at all times, including knowing where they are and who they are with.



FIRST DAYS

- Welcome them warmly.
- Offer food and show them around your home.
- Help them contact home to confirm safe arrival.
- Explain household routines clearly and simply.
- Allow time to rest and adjust.
- Show your student around your area and practice getting to SWIS.
- SWIS will hold an orientation session for the student, and give them their uniform and stationery.

Be patient—everything will feel new and unfamiliar at first.

BUILDING A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Communicate clearly and simply.
- Speak slowly and check understanding.
- Be patient and supportive.
- Be open to cultural differences.
- Encourage your student to participate in family life and share their culture.

Hosting is rewarding, but it can also take time and patience as everyone adjusts.



DAILY LIFE AT HOME

Meals

- Provide three meals a day and snacks.
- Be flexible with cultural preferences.
- Food can be a source of comfort—encourage sharing and cooking together.

Expectations

- Explain routines (meals, chores, laundry, internet use)
- We suggest showering to be completed by 9pm and video calling/talking by 10.30pm.
- Encourage participation in household life.

Accommodation

Your student's room should be:

- clean, warm, and private (own room),
- furnished with a bed, storage, and study space,
- equipped with heating and access to power,
- supported by working smoke alarms.

Internet & Communication

- Students need regular contact with family.
- Agree on reasonable times for calls and internet use.
- Ensure access to Wi-Fi.



CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT & WELLBEING

It can be a big culture shock adjusting to life in a new country, along with any communication difficulties they may have. Each student will react differently depending on age, life experiences, culture, expectations and personality.

Students may experience:

- culture shock,
- homesickness,
- tiredness or withdrawal.

Support them by:

- being patient and reassuring,
- keeping communication open,
- encouraging friendships and activities,
- allowing some private time while encouraging engagement,
- homesickness is normal and usually passes with time.
- contact the school if you have concerns.

SAFETY & SUPERVISION

- Always know where your student is.
- No overnight stays without approval and vetting.
- Inform the school of any travel or changes at home.
- Ensure your student understands emergency procedures (e.g. calling 111).





SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to:

- attend school every day,
- participate fully in all classes,
- complete homework and assessments,
- follow school and homestay rules.

Encourage involvement in sports, clubs, and activities to help them settle and make friends.

RULES & LEGAL EXPECTATIONS

Students must follow:

- New Zealand law,
- School rules,
- Homestay family rules.

Strictly prohibited:

- drugs, alcohol (under 18), smoking,
- driving or hitchhiking,
- visiting bars or clubs.

Any serious breaches may result in the student being sent home.



HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE

- Students have medical insurance.
- Inform the school of any serious illness or injury.
- Seek medical care when needed and keep records for insurance.

Contact the school immediately in serious situations.

TRAVEL & OVERNIGHT STAYS

- All travel requires prior approval.
- Independent travel requires written consent from parents and school.
- Overnight stays must be approved and supervised.

Safety and supervision are always the priority.



IF ISSUES ARISE

Sometimes challenges occur. If they do:

- communicate early with the school,
- work together to find solutions,
- seek support when needed.

We are here to help ensure a positive experience for everyone.

SAYING GOODBYE

Saying farewell can be emotional. Many families build lasting relationships.

Take time to celebrate the experience and the connections made.



TERTIARY AND INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS) CODE OF PRACTICE 2021 – THE CODE



When learners from other countries come to study in New Zealand, it is important that they are well informed, safe, and properly cared for. New Zealand educational providers have an important responsibility for international school learners' welfare.

What is the Code?

The Code is a document which provides a framework for service delivery by educational providers and their agents to international learners. The Code sets out the minimum standards of advice and care that are expected of educational providers with respect to international learners. The Code applies to pastoral care and provision of information only, and not to academic standards.

Who does the Code apply to?

The Code applies to all education providers in New Zealand with learners enrolled on international study visas. The Code is mandatory to these providers and must be signed by them.

What is an "international school learner"?

An "international school learner" is a foreign student studying in a New Zealand primary, intermediate or secondary school.

How can I get a copy of the Code?

For a quick reference go to <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/know-the-code/international-school-learners/>

For a copy of the complete Code of Practice visit:

https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Code-of-Practice/Tertiary-and-International-Learners-Code-2021/NZQA_Pastoral-Care-Code-of-Practice_English.pdf

If something goes wrong?

If you have concerns regarding the International learner's treatment by the School or by an agent of the School, the first thing you must do is contact the principal, the International Coordinator, or another person who has been identified to you as someone that you can approach. The Code requires all institutions to have fair and equitable internal complaints procedures for learners and you need to go through these internal processes before you can take the complaint any further.



Is your complaint about a provider breaching the Code?

As the Code administrator, NZQA has the legal authority to investigate potential breaches of the Code. It has a process for finding out if the concern or complaint is valid and if a provider has breached the Code. This includes getting information from both the learner who has raised the concern or complaint and the education provider. For information about how to make a complaint see the NZQA website:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/know-the-code/learner-complaints/>

A summary of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Learners

The Code sets standards for educational providers to ensure that:

- high professional standards are maintained,
- international learners are recruited in an ethical and responsible manner,
- comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information is provided to international learners,
- international learners receive relevant information before entering into any commitments,
- contractual dealings with international learners are conducted ethically and responsibly,
- the particular needs of international learners are recognised
- international learners under the age of 18 are placed in safe accommodation,
- all providers have fair and equitable internal procedures for resolving international learner grievances.

Full details of what is covered can be found in the Code itself.



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+64 4 939 9872



international@swis.school.nz



www.swis.school.nz/international-students



**30 Te Wharepōuri St
Berhampore
Wellington 6021
New Zealand**