



# **Handbook for Homestay Families and Hosted Students Reformation Lutheran School**

**2022-23**

## **Introduction**

Reformation Lutheran School uses God's Word to educate the total student: spiritually, intellectually, and physically in a caring Christian community.

In a desire to access this type of education for their children, some parents need to rely upon host families to partner in the parenting and caring for their children while they attend RLS.

This handbook is to serve as a guideline for homestay families and hosted students but is by no means an all-inclusive document. Homestay families and hosted students are encouraged to communicate with the international advisor or principal, the student's family, and the student to ensure a positive experience for all involved. When appropriate, different guidelines have been established for international students.

Please also keep in mind that the international advisor may at some point contact the homestay parent regarding a student's experience. Please do not take this personally. We encourage students to openly communicate with the international advisor regarding their homestay experience. Occasionally, students need an adult to help them communicate their questions or concerns. The international advisor fills that role for the student.

# Homestay Families

By being a homestay family, you are being asked to treat this student as a member of your family. Explain expectations as a family member to the student at the beginning of the school year. A written plan is an appropriate way to communicate your expectations to the student. It is understood that every family has a different set of rules and procedures. The hosted student, as a member of the homestay family, is expected to follow these rules and procedures. The student's family is expected to support the homestay family's rules and procedures. Some things to cover during that meeting might be:

- Procedures for room cleaning, changing bed linens, etc.
- Family mealtimes and expectations for preparing and cleaning up after a meal
- Curfew and quiet times
- Phone (both house and cell phone) and internet use and restrictions
- Television use and restrictions
- What expenses are not covered by room and board and will be charged to the student – i.e., long distance phone call charges
- How to schedule needs for transportation
- Financial arrangements: where they have set up banking, allowances, money restrictions, etc.
- The hosted student and his/her family will provide the host family with a list of emergency contact numbers and desired procedures. These numbers should be reviewed and verified.

Have regular monthly meetings with the student to provide both you and the student with a forum in which to discuss difficulties and concerns. A checklist for the monthly meetings is provided in this handbook.

### **What to do when a child is ill:**

- For host families will need to make medical decisions with the student for minor illness: flu, cold, etc. The student is encouraged to call their home to let their parents know they are ill and what has been or needs to be done. Major illnesses should be brought to the attention of the parents directly by the host family. The host family should also provide the international advisor with any necessary information. If the student is 18 years old or older, they can legally make their own medical decisions. The international parents are required to provide release statements for their student and each student is required to have medical insurance, each as verified by the office of the International Advisor. Host families will receive a copy of their home-stay child's insurance and emergency medical release. Host families should always ask the student and the family about any food or pet allergies.

### **Accommodation:**

- It is highly desirable that each student have their own room; however, a shared room arrangement is acceptable.
- Ask your student to provide a listing of food likes and dislikes, food allergies, etc.
- The students should keep their room area clean, and the student and host family should determine procedures for room cleaning during the initial family meetings.
- If a homestay family will not be able to supervise a student for an extended time, i.e., a family vacation or event, the host family should make arrangements, in consultation with the student, for alternate supervision. This could mean bringing in someone to your home to supervise or finding another family for the student to stay with during your absence. Please inform the school of your plans in case we need to make an emergency contact. The host family is expected to compensate for supervising the party with a minimum of \$21.50 per day if the student stays in a different home. If a supervising party is brought into the home, compensation should be determined by the homestay family.
- Provide internet access. This is required for basic homework assignments as well as communication, via e-mail and messaging to families. Homestay families need to set appropriate limits on computer usage, in a formal discussion with the student at the beginning of the host family experience.
- Learning to speak English is an important goal for each international student. Homestay families are to provide an English and culturally rich environment for the home-stay student.
- Have monthly meetings with the student to discuss issues and concerns. A checklist for this discussion is included at the end of the handbook.

## Communication:

- Be patient and repeat yourself over and over again. Do not be frustrated by repetitive and monotonous communication.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. Speak slower not louder. Allow longer for responses. You will be able to watch as the student processes the vocabulary and sentence structure in his or her head.
- Your student may be exceptional at English or may be a beginner. Make a consistent effort to check up with them and draw them into conversation but understand that feedback is sometimes minimal depending on personality and English ability.
- Use charades and act out meanings when appropriate. Smiling often and being positive covers a variety of communication barriers.
- For clear communication with students who are learning English, avoid using contractions like “shouldn’t, can’t and we’ll.” Also avoid slang terminology and be aware of expressions like “the glass is half full” or “raining like cats and dogs” and enjoy explaining what these odd phrases mean.
- If you need any emergency help or extra information, please contact Mr. Mike Ash, the PDSO. He is the coordinator of housing for the international program, and he can be reached at [ashm@refsd.org](mailto:ashm@refsd.org). His phone number is 858-880-5855.

## Rules:

- Set rules and communicate about them right away while taking nothing for granted. Students may be used to living very differently at home and need to know the clear expectations that you have for them.
- Students may be used to having a maid, keeping their own bedtime hours, having no scheduled time for homework, and coming and going without communicating. They are willing to adjust all of these habits in order to fit in with their family, but they need clear and consistent communication in order to understand.
- Students will likely need guidelines for computer, phone, and TV use. It is typical to have them help with chores.
- Some students will need a number of rules and guidelines and other students will do fine with little suggestions and corrections. Find what is most comfortable and best for the success of your student.

### **Time Management:**

- Some students may have an easy time managing their time and other students will require more help with structuring their time in order to be successful.
- Students may be able to thrive on less sleep, but most will need a bedtime, especially on the weekdays. Anywhere from 8:00 –9:00 pm is a good guideline.
- A designated homework time is helpful to most students.
- You will have a school calendar, Gradelink login, and may contact the classroom teacher for any additional information.

### **Food and Activities:**

- You are responsible for all meals. You may purchase the hot lunch provided by RLS twice a week and work with the student to pack a bag lunch each day.
- Ask your student if he or she has any food allergies.
- Please include your student in all family activities as it is comfortable and appropriate for you both.
- Be aware of the four main events that the international students do each year and think of bringing your student over for these activities. Activities include singing in church, Family Fun Day, Christmas in Clairemont, and other school functions. Also, be aware of social events at school or other activities around the cities that may be fun for the whole family. It can be a tremendous amount of fun to show them your slice of America.

### **Spiritual Growth:**

- Most students will want to go to church with you because that is what your family does, and it is a respectful thing to do and a way to learn about Western culture. When a student lives with you, you will be the example of spiritual life for the student.
- They may be generally curious about the stories behind the Bible and how it comes into practice in everyday life. Explain family customs that you may take for granted like: Why you pray before a meal; What is the main purpose of worship and communion; How and why Christians celebrate Christmas, Easter, New Year, and Thanksgiving?
- Students may not actively participate in prayers, songs, and many of the Christ-centered things that your family does, but encourage them to attend anyway, be respectful and learn about the Christian faith. Students may learn about God at first because they may use the knowledge to get a good grade in a required class, but the love that they experience through your family and the Word will plant a seed of faith for eternal life.

## **Tools for Extra Help:**

The following tools will be extra sources of information: Registration Schedule, School Calendar, sports information packets, and announcements may be found at, and [www.reformationschoolsd.org](http://www.reformationschoolsd.org).

## **Host Family Stipend and Conditions**

Host families will receive a stipend for room and board for the student. RLS will determine the dollar value of the stipend. The student's family will pay the required fee to RLS and RLS will disperse the stipend to the host family on a monthly basis, at the end of each month. Host families need to be aware that most international students do not go home during the school breaks, due to distance. Occasionally, the student may travel home over a longer break, such as RLS has at Christmas. If the home-stay student does not travel over a break, the home-stay family does not receive an additional stipend. For international students, the home-stay stipend includes in-school lunches and cultural activities. The stipend is paid for September through June.

RLS appreciates the flexibility that you have in providing for your homestay student. Typically, students who begin a homestay program are expected to stay with you for the duration of the school year. However, RLS may remove a student from a host family without prior notice, during which time the host family will only be compensated for the weeks of housing that have been provided to the student.

## Monthly Meeting Checklist

Use the checklist as a guide for your monthly meetings with your hosted students. This list is to serve as a guide. Host families will need to add items to discuss relevant to their unique concerns.

- Review of grades
  
- Review of achievements over the past month
  
- Questions or concerns regarding:
  - ✓ Attitude
  - ✓ Personal hygiene
  - ✓ Participation in family activities and chores
  - ✓ Participation in church activities
  - ✓ Participation in school activities
  - ✓ Eating or nutrition
  - ✓ Overall health
  - ✓ Curfew
  - ✓ Rules violations
  - ✓ Cleanliness
  
  - ✓ Review upcoming events for the next month.
  - ✓ Home
  - ✓ School
  - ✓ Church

## Homestay Students

### Homestay students are expected to:

- Follow established family rules as determined by the host families.
- An important goal for any homestay student is to grow in English proficiency. If a homestay student does not demonstrate an interest in speaking English and involving themselves in English speaking activities, they may be removed from their homestay privilege.
- Communicate transportation needs well in advance and as often as possible, making arrangements in advance on their own. This includes an itinerary for airport departure and arrival times.
- Communicate problems or concerns with your host family. Don't let little problems grow into bigger issues. If you are feeling ill, inform your host family right away.
- Contribute to the family by being willing to perform and take part in family chores and activities.
- Budget for seasonal clothing and personal care items. The student will need to communicate with the host family when items need to be purchased and arrange a mutually agreed upon time to go shopping for those items.
- Maintain a good academic standing.
- Read the RLS Handbook so that you understand the policies and rules of our schools.
- Ensure that host families receive appropriate repayment for costs above and beyond the usual room and board. For example, if you use the phone to make long distance phone calls, the family should be repaid for the expense.
- Be a willing participant in family activities. Your homestay family will ask you to attend various activities with them as part of your American experience. Be cooperative and respectful of their requests for you to participate.
- Seek assistance for homework needs or problems from the classroom teachers.
- Become a member of the student body by becoming involved in activities at RLS. The student is encouraged to join co-curricular activities, intramural activities, and attend school events such as dances, games, concerts, plays, and other special events.



- International students should notify the school if they intend to return to RLS by the beginning of March of each school year and complete registration materials.
- All students must live in a host home that has been approved by the school. International students will be placed in a host home by a committee of the BDS president, principal, and international advisor.
- International students should notify the school if and when his/her parents make a visit to see them in the United States. The faculty and staff of RLS would like the opportunity to meet your families.
- Students must provide the host family with all necessary contact information: home phone number, emergency numbers, and e-mail. It is especially important that the host families of international students have a family e-mail since this will be the primary way the host family will have to communicate with parents or guardians.
- International students must provide proof of medical coverage for treatment in the U.S. This is a requirement of the U.S. Government for all students on an F-1 Visa. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to determine their insurance needs. A copy of your policy card must be on file with RLS and your host family.
- Homestay families will be provided access to the students' grades through the school website. Grades can be checked on a weekly basis and a hard copy of report cards will be mailed to the homestay family.



## **Participation in Co-Curricular Activities**

Participation in extra-curricular/co-curricular activities is an important part of being a student at RLS. God expects Christians to make use of the academic, athletic, and fine arts talents He has given us. Participation in extracurricular activities is important for admissions to colleges. Students and their families should evaluate individual talents and interests and match them to the activities offered at RLS. Co-curricular activities offered at RLS are:

- Singing
- Athletics
- Plays
- Christmas concert

Students are expected to follow all guidelines established by RLS and the Athletic Director of RLS regarding co-curricular participation. A complete list of rules and activities along with their descriptions is printed in the Student/Parent Handbook.



