International Homestay Handbook
WELCOME!

Thank you for choosing to participate in the Tacoma Community College Homestay Program. Through the Homestay Program, international students experience life in an American household as they pursue their academic goals. For those who have seen the United States only through books and movies, the program offers a rare opportunity to glimpse the ways in which real Americans live. Daily contact with hosts helps students develop conversational English skills, and the living assistance provided allows them to concentrate on their studies. The bonds of friendship established between hosts and students can last a lifetime.

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THE PROGRAM

The International Homestay Program at Tacoma Community College was founded in 1979 in response to the growing need of international students for alternative forms of housing. At that time, apartment living was the only option for those with no friends or family in the area. The Homestay Program has made it much easier for students to integrate into American life. The program was very successful and grew rapidly. Within two years, a full-time coordinator was hired and Homestay became an integral part of the services offered for international students.

The International Housing Coordinator works within the division of International Student Services and Programs (ISSP) and is responsible for processing housing applications, screening and training potential hosts, arranging airport pick-up, matching students and hosts and providing general support to both the student and host.

The matching of students and hosts is central to the success of the program. The goal of this process is to pair hosts with students who have compatible interests and personalities. Because matches are made according to personalities rather than by a numbered list, the wait for a student varies.

The homestay program is only available to current international students at Tacoma Community College. Students will not be placed with hosts participating in other homestay programs. Hosts may be certified by other programs, but may not simultaneously host those students and Tacoma Community College students. Differing program rules and expectations have caused conflicts in the past. It is important that the college is able to offer assurances that all participants have been screened and approved by Tacoma Community College. Cooperation with these suggestions enables the college to maintain a high standard of service. The Housing Coordinator has the discretion to dismiss any student or host from the program for non-compliance with requirements.

“The coordinators role is not to make each student and host family perfectly happy and in love with each other, but to provide an experience, unlike any other, from which students and host families can learn to live together in peace and grow facing their problems” (Peace Corps).
THE HOSTS

Our hosts are a reflection of the people who live in the USA. There is no ‘typical’ American family. Our hosts can be single people, couples (married or not), with or without children, of all ages and from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Although each home is different, all hosts are kind, generous and curious about people from other countries. They are happy to have students share lives as respected and active members of their households. English must be the primary spoken language spoken in the home.

For hosts, living with an international student is a unique educational experience. It is a great chance to learn about other ways of life and to view the United States from the perspective of someone from another culture. Hosts must always be aware that they are acting as ambassadors and have great influence on opinions international students form about our country. Hosts will need to be patient and guide the students when they are in the process of adjusting to the new culture.

To be considered for the program, hosts must attend an orientation meeting before submitting an application form. The Housing Coordinator does a background check of everybody who is 18 or older and lives in the home. The Housing Coordinator also does a reference check and visits the home to view the environment where the student will live. After the screening process has been completed, hosts wait for an appropriate student to be found.

Hosts are expected to keep the Housing Coordinator informed about changes in their homestay situation. They are to notify the Housing Coordinator if the host or student is planning to go on vacation (HC makes a written agreement for all parties involved); if people are moving in or out of the house; a change in availability of rooms, etc.

THE STUDENTS

Homestay students all have unique personalities. They come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. During the history of the program, nearly 40 countries have been represented. Reasons for joining vary. Some students want to improve their English speaking skills and learn about American culture, while others believe homestay offers safety and security.

Each student completes an application form which provides details about their personalities and interests. These profiles are used to match them with compatible hosts. Students agree to live within the selected home and abide by host guidelines and program rules. Since November 2008 students in homestay are required to sign a quarterly commitment contract (see example in the back of this handbook).

Starting Fall Quarter 2009, new students and hosts are required to sign a Homestay Agreement. Examples of these agreements can be found on our website. This Homestay Agreement will replace the quarterly commitment contract for students.
PREPARATION FOR HOMESTAY

When people from different backgrounds decide to live together, it is important that they first take time to learn about one another. Television and movies rarely portray real life, so a little research may be needed to discover what other countries are really like. Once there is basic knowledge and understanding upon which to build, successful relationships can be created and maintained through clear communication, flexibility, and respect for new perspectives.

Both students and hosts can experience culture shock. Participants initially feel excited, happy, and a little nervous. As time passes, they may begin to feel a bit anxious about some of the challenges they encounter. Gradually, things which had been sources of frustration become sources of humor as everyone becomes more relaxed. In the end, participants are better able to respect differences. For more information regarding culture shock, see page 11.

ARRIVAL

International students are allowed to enter the US up to 4 weeks before school activities begin. Homestay students are asked to arrive during the scheduled arrival days before their new student orientation. If a student would like to enter a homestay before the scheduled arrival days, they are to request this with the Housing Coordinator. Students must inform the college of arrival dates as soon as they book their ticket so that hosts will have sufficient time to prepare.

Airport pick-ups are conducted during an assigned timeframe before orientation week. The Housing Coordinator will arrange for a college representative to greet the students at the Seattle/Tacoma International Airport. All students will be met at their baggage claim, unless otherwise communicated. If students arrive outside of the assigned arrival time, they will have to provide their own transportation.

Should a student fail to meet the Tacoma Community College representative at his/her baggage claim, the student should call the Housing Coordinator at #253-304-4666 and wait at the international baggage claim (carousel #1). Students should call the Housing Coordinator immediately if they are unable to meet the representative or if they become lost. If a connecting flight is missed, the student should call to update his/her arrival information. It is very important to inform the Housing Coordinator of any changes.

From the airport, students are taken directly to their new homes. Typically, students are excited, but also tired and hungry. Some may feel apprehensive. Some may have difficulty speaking English. After students have a chance to rest, eat, and gain confidence, a normal routine can be established.

Once the student is settled, the host and student will go over the handbook as well as the house rules and expectations. The host will show how to use appliances and other items in the house, how to care for things, how and what to clean up, explain light chores the student will have, how to use internet, etc.
THE STUDENT'S ROOM

Each student must have a private room with:
- a bed
- desk and chair
- study lamp
- sufficient storage space

New host families have to provide an internet connection in the bedroom.

Hosts will provide bed linens, blankets, pillows, access to laundry; detergent and bathroom items like towels, soap and toilet paper. Utilities are included as well. A lock on the door is not required but will add to the feeling of security for some students.

The room and closet cannot be used by the host for storage or other purposes. If a student wants to decorate the room, he or she must ask the host for permission before making major changes.

Some hosts have bedrooms in the basement or lower level of their homes. In accordance with city codes, these rooms must provide safe, direct access to the outside in case of fire or emergency.

NOTE: At first, the idea of lower level room may not appeal to some international students. Some might mistakenly interpret the room's location as an indication that their status in the household is separate and lower. For young Americans, these rooms are highly desired because they offer the most privacy. Students should understand that the room's location is not an insult; hosts probably believe the student would prefer more privacy, just like an American college student.
COMMITMENTS

Homestay placements are quarterly commitments for both the host and the student. Students in homestay are required to sign a quarterly commitment contract (an example of this contract is in the back of this handbook). Starting Fall Quarter 2009, hosts and new students are required to sign a Homestay Agreement. Examples of these agreements can be found on our website. This Homestay Agreement will replace the quarterly commitment contract for students.

In order to have the privilege of living with a host, students are obligated to treat the members of the household with respect. They are committed to follow the homestay program guidelines, as well as household guidelines. Lastly, they must understand that honesty and communication are essential to their success and happiness. Even though sometimes it takes courage to ask questions or to talk about a difficult subject, it is important for students and hosts to try. The Housing Coordinator is available to help. Caring for each other’s belongings is very important and shows that you respect each other. Students should inform their hosts if they have broken or damaged something by accident. Students can be held responsible to pay the cost to repair or replace the item.

Students have to understand that homestay is more than just renting a room. They will adjust to the daily routine and schedule of the host as a family member would. Students don’t have special privileges. Remember: “Be a family member, not a renter.”

Hosts have to understand that hosting a student is more than just feeding an extra person. In addition to abiding by program rules, hosts should assist students as they become accustomed to their new environment. Hosts may be called upon to offer opinions on many issues related to daily life in the US. Most importantly, however, they provide a stable, friendly environment for students. Hosts strive to make students feel safe, comfortable and cared for. They are asked to treat students as members of the family, but are not meant to act as parents. They are not expected to monitor the student’s academic progress or daily activities outside the home. Successful hosts treat students with respect and strive to communicate honestly and clearly.

**Important note for students**

You are placed with your host family for the entire quarter. You are not able to move during the quarter unless you have permission from the Housing Coordinator. You can move to another Homestay or apartment at the end of each quarter. Make sure you notify the Housing Coordinator at least 4 weeks before the end of the quarter if you want to move out.

If you do move out before the end of the quarter without the permission of the Housing Coordinator, you will have to pay the homestay fee for the remainder of the quarter to your host family. You will no longer be able to participate in the Housing Program and the Housing Coordinator will not be able to assist you with housing.
RESPONSIBILITIES

Students who choose to live with hosts become a genuine part of the household, therefore they have responsibilities. The student is responsible for cleaning his/her own areas like the bedroom and can help with minor chores in the home. In American homes, everyone keeps the spaces they use neat and clean. For example, after making breakfast, lunches or snacks, students should clean the countertop, dishes and utensils they have used. Also, the bathroom should be left clean, with damp towels hung up to dry. Beds are made each day and linens are washed often. Hosts will explain these household routines.

It is considered very kind when students offer assistance with minor family chores, such as helping in the kitchen after dinner. Many students feel more comfortable when they have small things to do, just like other household members. However, hosts must be aware that chore assignment can be a divisive issue, and should be very careful when giving tasks to students. A student may readily agree to do something which he or she actually finds demeaning. For example, in America, taking the garbage can to the curbside is a task commonly given to older children or young adults. For hosts, it may seem an easy thing for a strong student to do, but some students might see this job as degrading and may even interpret it as the host’s way of saying that he or she is not liked or respected. The host may not realize the student has misunderstood so completely.

In many cultures, age is a critical factor in determining household responsibilities. In the US, people are not particularly concerned with age. If there are younger children in the home, hosts may need to be sensitive to the student’s seniority. Students should never be responsible for major chores such as cleaning the entire house, baby-sitting, or caring for pets. In the end, although students want to learn about daily life in an American household, school is their number one priority. Homestay, above all, should provide a quiet space with plenty of free time for studying. Whatever the case, it is a good idea to get to know one another before starting a pattern.
HOUSEHOLD GUIDELINES

Different cultures have different standards for polite behavior. In the US, the following actions define polite behavior: cleaning up after yourself or guests, speaking politely, saying ‘thank you’, asking permission before using something belonging to another person, being honest, keeping promises, respecting the beliefs of others, and being punctual. Many homes have rules and guidelines based on these ideas in order to maintain order and good will.

Before a student’s arrival, hosts should decide which household guidelines are the most important. The guidelines that the school has established are the basis for the program, but hosts can add their own guidelines, such as curfew, times for visitors, or shower schedules. Bed & Breakfast hosts should have clear expectations on when the student can use the kitchen and how to use the stove, pots and pans.

Each household is unique, so individual hosts decide what works best for them. Hosts do not, however, have the authority to change rules regarding program fees or responsibilities. We recommend writing down these household guidelines and putting them on the fridge or in the student’s bedroom. It is the host’s responsibility to explain these guidelines to the student after the student has arrived.

Household guidelines are to be verbally understood and accepted as a way of life. Ideally, the commitment between students and hosts should be more family like than business like. Hosts who attempt to establish an independent, contractual relationship with a student will lose the opportunity to host for the Tacoma Community College program and students will be removed from their home. Likewise, if a student chooses not to cooperate with clear, reasonable guidelines, he or she may lose the privilege of living with a host. Please call the Housing Coordinator if there is confusion or conflict.
FOOD AND MEAL PREPARATION

The following are tips offered by experienced hosts:

♦ Try to plan dinner for a specific time every evening. If this is not possible, a weekly dinner schedule posted on the refrigerator or bulletin board helps prevent confusion.

♦ Hosts should make the students aware that they can take food from the cupboards and refrigerator. At the same time, be sure to show them what they should not eat, such as the ingredients needed for evening dinner or tomorrow's lunch.

♦ Take time to explain or write down rules regarding use of kitchen appliances such as the stove and microwave. Things which may seem obvious - like turning off the burner when finished cooking or keeping metal out of the microwave - might not occur to a student.

♦ Many hosts prepare the weekly shopping list with the student's help. Some hosts post the shopping list on the refrigerator and ask the student to add to it during the week.

♦ Communication is very important, because learning to eat American food is a difficult adjustment for most students. Even though it may take a little time to adapt to a new diet, students must understand they cannot expect hosts to prepare special meals to accommodate them. However, hosts and students should discuss basic likes and dislikes. Hosts like to know student's true feelings, so students should not be afraid to state their opinions. It is very easy to make mistakes when each tries to guess what the other prefers. Clear communication and opportunities for input will prevent many misunderstandings.

Examples of American breakfasts: sandwiches, toast, bagels, muffins, fruit, cold or hot cereal, eggs & bacon, pancakes etc. Most American breakfasts will include coffee, tea, fruit juice or milk as side beverages.

Examples of American lunches: sandwiches, soups or leftovers from dinner the night before, etc. Some Americans buy their lunches at a restaurant or cafeteria in the area.

Examples of American dinners: hamburgers, hot dogs, pizzas, pork, chicken, beef, fish, corn on the cob, salads (potato salads are very popular in the US), (mashed) potatoes, spaghetti, lasagna, burrito’s, taco’s, etc.
CULTURE SHOCK

It is very normal for students to run into difficulties when they have to adapt to a new culture that is very different from their own culture. Some, if not most students will experience a culture shock without realizing it. Symptoms of a culture shock can be: frustration, sadness and loneliness, feeling misunderstood, lack of confidence, insomnia, homesickness, negative feelings about the new culture, etc. Some students will find it difficult to understand what is appropriate or not. Hosts are there to help students understand the US culture. Below are listed the four different stages of culture shock. The length of each stage varies per student.

Stage 1: Excitement
The individual experiences a holiday or 'honeymoon' period with their new surroundings.

The students feel very positive about the culture; are overwhelmed with impressions; find the new culture exotic and are fascinated; are passive, meaning they have little experience of the culture

Stage 2: Withdrawal
The individual now has some more face to face experience of the culture and starts to find things different, strange and frustrating.

The students find the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable; begin to dislike the culture and react negatively to the behavior; feel anxious; start to withdraw; begin to criticize, mock or show animosity to the people

Stage 3: Adjustment
The individual now has a routine, feels more settled and is more confident in dealing with the new culture.

The students understand and accept the behavior of the people; feel less isolated; regains their sense of humor

Stage 4: Enthusiasm
The individual now feels 'at home'.

The students enjoy being in the culture; functions well in the culture; prefer certain cultural traits of the new culture rather than their own; adopt certain behaviors from the new culture.

From http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html

Host families play a very important role when it comes to helping a student adjust to the US culture. It is important for a student to feel comfortable in his/her homestay, and that he/she is able to ask questions. If you notice that your student is experiencing a culture shock, there is a lot of helpful information on the internet.
Tips for students on how to deal with culture shock:

♦ Be patient! Give yourself time to get to know the US culture. Watch and learn from people around you.
♦ Become comfortable with speaking and listening to the English language. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes or to talk to people who speak English fluently. The more you practice English, the quicker you learn.
♦ Tell your host family and other people about your culture so they understand your feelings and behavior better. Respect for each other’s culture is very important and by sharing the cultural differences it is easier to understand each other. Your host family can help you to understand the US culture better.
♦ Stay in touch with your family and friends at home. Tell them about your experiences here, your classes, your friends, your struggles, etc.
♦ Talk to other international students who are in the same situation as you are. Find out how they try to adjust to the US culture.
♦ Don’t lock yourself in your room! Get involved in activities like the ISO club, Sports Night, Student Life activities, Mentor Program, etc. By getting involved you will quickly gain friends from several countries who you can relate to.
♦ Don’t be afraid to ask for help! Your host family is a great resource and the staff at Tacoma Community College is also there to help you.

We don’t expect to give up your culture. You have to find your own way to become comfortable with both cultures. The best way to do that is to be open for new experiences. When you are comfortable, you will be able to enjoy your time away from home.
SCHEDULES

Clear communication regarding schedules is very important. Hosts cannot decide when and where students may go, but students need to inform hosts of their plans in order to avoid worry and conflict. Because every situation is different, it will take practice to learn to balance these concerns.

It is a good idea for students to inform hosts at least two hours in advance if they cannot be present for dinner. Hosts prepare dinner with the student in mind, so it is very inconsiderate to make them wait or worry. When hosts cannot prepare dinner for the student, they must communicate the change in plan and have something pre-prepared for the student to eat.

If a student decides to stay out late or go on a trip, he or she must inform the host. Hosts feel responsible for the well-being of students and will worry if they don’t know when their student(s) will be home. It would be good to tell your host where you are, if you will come home and where you can be reached.

VISITORS

Some hosts have additional space and may be able to accommodate overnight visitors. Students are allowed to have guests in their home, but must obtain permission from the host before inviting others to stay with them. If a host decides that someone may not be allowed in their home, it is important that they clearly explain the reason to the student. Students must respect the hosts' wishes with regard to this matter.

Students are not allowed to share a room with overnight visitors of the opposite sex.

INTERNET

These days it is very important for students to have access to the internet, both at home and at school. Students need access to the internet to for their classes as well as to keep in touch with their friends and family at home. Starting 2009, new host families are required to provide an internet connection in the student’s bedroom. Hosts that have been hosting for Tacoma Community College before 2009 are not required to provide internet for the student but it is recommended. Homestay fees reflect whether a host has internet available in the student’s room (dial-up connections excluded) or not. Hosts do not have to provide a computer or laptop for the student.

Every country has different rules regarding downloading from the internet. In the US, we have very strict rules regarding illegal downloading. Therefore, students are not allowed to download pornography, illegal music or other illegal files, even if they use their own computer.
ACTIVITIES

Students become independent very quickly. After hosts introduce them to the bus system and the neighborhood, they soon learn their way around Tacoma. Most students will spend the majority of their time outside the household with school activities, studying, or hanging out with friends.

Immediate friendships are usually formed with other international students when students are placed in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes. Those who find themselves immersed in a new culture naturally turn first to those with whom they have the most in common. Homestay then becomes very important, as it is all too easy for students form similar backgrounds to stay within their own group speaking their own language. Interaction with hosts keeps students involved in American culture and makes speaking English part of the daily routine.

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION

The International Student Organization (ISO) is a club at Tacoma Community College run by international students. ISO provides many opportunities for students to learn leadership skills, visit places in the Northwest, and meet other students. Some past activities have included trips to Mt. Rainier, Blake Island, and Victoria, BC. There are also welcome parties, picnics, ski-trips, and an annual potluck dinner. During fall, winter, and spring quarters, ISO organizes a weekly sports night.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Americans value privacy. They are very private about personal lives, belongings, and homes. Some people do not feel comfortable discussing their salaries or lending their belongings. Hosts should explain their personal feelings about privacy in order to avoid conflicts.

For students, privacy is also an important issue. A lock on their bedroom door adds to the feeling of privacy and security. It is up to the host to decide whether to put a lock on the student’s room. It is a good idea to have two keys, one for the student and the other kept by the host for emergencies or in case the student’s key is lost. Hosts with young children need to make certain they cannot or will not enter the student’s room unless invited.

Students should be given keys to the home. If there is a security system, the codes should be shared with the student. Students are not allowed to make duplicate keys, lend keys to others or share security codes. Good habits, such as locking the door after entering or exiting the home, should be practiced and encouraged.
HOLIDAYS & OUTINGS

There are many occasions when families and friends travel or celebrate together. They might go on weekend trips to the city, beach, or mountains. Students are often invited to accompany hosts on these outings.

Sometimes, in the excitement of including the student in their home, family members shower them with gifts. They want to show the student they are welcome and cared for. In some cases, students may not understand the family's intention and instead may feel embarrassed because they are unprepared or cannot afford to give gifts in return. It is wonderful to include students, but important to explain traditions carefully.

RELIGION

Some hosts may wish to invite students to attend religious services with them. This is a kind gesture meant to teach the student about hosts' values and beliefs, but students are not required to attend.

Often, the religion of students will differ from that of their hosts. Discussions about these differences can be a good way for hosts and students to begin to understand one another. While discussions about religion are a natural and important part of the homestay relationship, it is vital that hosts and students understand the difference between sharing ideas and proselytizing. Homestay is not a forum for religious conversion and any host or student who pressures others in the home to conform to a particular belief system will be dismissed from the program.

TRANSPORTATION

Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation, so it is important that hosts teach students about the transit system and neighborhood as quickly as possible. Each homestay is located either within walking distance of the college or on a bus line.

Some hosts lend students bicycles. If hosts choose to do this, they must inform students that they are required to wear a helmet when riding a bike in Tacoma. Students must have a sturdy lock and a helmet. Students can be held accountable if the bicycle is damaged or stolen.

Some students choose to buy their own cars. It is Washington state law that drivers must possess a valid driver's license and must purchase insurance for their vehicles. Students are often unclear on these issues and are encouraged to research before buying a car. The host or the staff at the International Student Office can help.
**TELEPHONE EXPENSES**

Telephone costs are not included in the homestay fee. Most international students will purchase a cell phone if they don’t already have one. For long distance phone calls students can buy a calling card. Host families have the option to allow students to make local phone calls from their phone.

**SMOKING AND ALCOHOL**

Most hosts do not allow smoking in their homes. Students who wish to smoke should ask which areas outside the house are to be used for smoking. In Washington State, it is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or consume alcoholic beverages. Students who are 21 or older must respect host guidelines regarding alcohol in their home.

**EXITS AND RE-ENTRIES**

Homestay students have the obligation to stay in their homestay for the entire quarter. All students have the opportunity to move to another homestay at the end of each quarter, no matter what their reason is. If a student wants to move at the end of the quarter they should inform the Housing Coordinator at least 4 weeks before the end of the quarter. Students will be asked to fill out an evaluation after they leave the homestay.

If a student chooses to leave the homestay before the end of the quarter, without the permission of the Housing Coordinator, he or she will be responsible for paying the fees remaining for the entire quarter. There are no exceptions to this rule.

If the host decides to terminate the arrangement, any fees paid in advance will be refunded and no fees will be owed for the remainder of the quarter. If the commitment ends because of a policy violation, emergency, or other special circumstance, the Housing Coordinator will determine the final fee.

Students, as well as the hosts, must inform the Housing Coordinator and each other, of their plans and any changes to their plans, in a timely manner.

For example:
- 4 weeks before the end of the quarter when a student wants to move or if a host cannot host a student the following quarter.
- 2 weeks before the student or host goes on vacation to determine the vacation fees and arrangements.

Students and hosts may not make their own arrangements at any time. The Housing Coordinator must always be involved in this process.
HOMESTAY FEES

The monthly homestay fees are based on a 30-day month and regardless of how many days there are in each month. Students must pay the host family on the 1st of each month. In some cases, new students may need to visit a bank to withdraw money, or to set up an account to wire money. For that reason, the very first payment may be delayed. Tacoma Community College hosts are not allowed to charge any extra fees besides the homestay fee.

REGULAR FEES

Complete homestay:
$550 incl. internet*
$530 excl. internet per month

Hosts do all the grocery shopping and prepare the evening meal. Students prepare their own breakfasts and lunches with food supplied by the host. If a host decides to have dinner out rather than cooking at home, the host is responsible for paying for the meal. The student must pay if he or she eats at the school cafeteria or at a restaurant instead of using food provided by the host. The student also pays for items such as pop or snack foods he or she might want while away from home.

Bed & Breakfast homestay:
$420 incl. internet *
$400 excl. internet per month

Hosts provide food for breakfast only, which the student can prepare him/herself. The student does the grocery shopping for his/her own lunches and dinners. The student can use the appliances in the hosts’ kitchen to prepare the meals and to store food.

*In order to charge the fees including internet the student must have access to internet in the bedroom, dial up connections not included. New host families are required to provide internet in the student’s bedroom.

PARTIAL FEES

Partial fees can be used in limited situations, for example when a student moves in or out during a month or when a student goes on vacation during vacation time.

Full daily fee = Monthly fee/number of days in the month
When working with partial or vacation fees, the final fee will be rounded up or down to whole dollars.
**VACATION FEES**

The vacation fee is $3.30 per day, or $100 for a full month, regardless of the type of homestay. The vacation fee will be charged if all of the following:

- The student gives the host and Housing Coordinator 2 weeks’ notice
- The student goes on vacation for 10 days or more in a row
- The vacation is during scheduled Tacoma Community College vacation times such as Christmas break, spring break, and summer quarter. If a student chooses to go on vacation during fall, winter or spring quarter, when there is no scheduled vacation time, the student is responsible for paying the full homestay fee.

The student will meet with the Housing Coordinator at least 2 weeks before s/he goes on vacation to go over the homestay fees. The Housing Coordinator will create a contract regarding the prorated homestay fee and go over the expectations and consequences if the student does not return after a certain date. Both the student and the Housing Coordinator will sign the contract. The host will receive a copy of the contract. In the back of this handbook is an example of this contract.

Hosts should also contact the Housing Coordinator if their student wants to go on vacation to verify the student contacts the Housing Coordinator. Host families should also contact the Housing Coordinator if they are planning to be gone for a week or longer. In this case, an agreement needs to be made with the host, student and coordinator.

**Vacation during summer quarter**

**Option 1:** The student pays the vacation fee while on vacation. In this case the student can keep her/his room as is and the host cannot use the student’s room for another student or visitors during this time. To calculate the prorated fee, each day of the month is counted. The partial fee will be used for the days that the student will be home. The student should pay the homestay fee before s/he goes on vacation.

**Option 2:** If the student doesn’t want to pay the vacation fee while on vacation, the student will need to pack up all their belongings and move out, so the room can be used for other students. In this case, Tacoma Community College will not guarantee that the student can return to his/her old room and host.

(Exception: In some cases, the Housing Coordinator will ask students if s/he can place a student in their room while they are on vacation. In this case, and only when a summer placement is guaranteed, the long term student will pack up his/her belongings so a summer student can move in. At the end of summer quarter, the summer student will move out and the long term student can move back in. In this case, the long term student does not have to pay the prorated fee to secure the room.)
ADVICE FROM STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS

♦ It is important to tell hosts which foods you like and dislike.
♦ Do not be afraid to ask questions. Many things will be new, so it is good to have correct information. It is hard to ask for help, but it is harder to worry.
♦ Do not be afraid to tell your true opinions or feelings. Americans like to know what people really think. They are open to different points of view, but do not like dishonesty.
♦ The questions and feelings you have are common to all new students. Please remember you are not alone. Your host, staff at Tacoma Community College and other students will understand.
♦ Let the Housing Coordinator know if you have any questions or problems that you are shy about sharing with your host. All meetings are confidential. Most problems can be solved easily.
♦ Tell your hosts when you are going to be late or if you are not coming home at the regular time. Hosts will worry if you do not call. If this happens often, they may even think you do not like or respect them.
♦ The staff members at the ISSP office will help when you have a problem.
♦ Remember to say “Thank You” when somebody does something nice for you.

Do keep things clean. Keep your bedroom clean. Clean up after yourself in the kitchen or bathroom. If you use dishes, wash them. If you splash water or spill something, wipe it up. In most homes, everyone helps with cleaning and cooking. It is polite of you to offer to help just like a member of the family

Don’t take long showers. Americans usually take 5-10 minute showers. Hot water tanks in most homes are small and the water can be used up quickly. Some homes have only one bathroom so you must be considerate of other family members’ schedules.
**MEDICAL INSURANCE**

International students at Tacoma Community College are required to have medical insurance to attend the college. Tacoma Community College offers a comprehensive insurance plan, which will cover the students in case of an illness or accident. Starting Fall quarter 2009, international students are required to purchase the health insurance provided by Tacoma Community College, named Firebird. With the Firebird insurance, the physician’s office will automatically send the bill to the insurance company. Students who are under 18 years old are able to give consent for treatment with this insurance. The Firebird insurance is for health purpose only and does not cover vision or dental. A full explanation of the TCC/Firebird plan is available at [www.fiig-insurance.com](http://www.fiig-insurance.com). Exceptions will be made for some students. For more information or to seek an exemption, contact Reuth Kao in the International office.

Students will receive their insurance card during the new student orientation in the first week. They will need to take their insurance card, photo ID and money for the co-payment to the clinic or hospital.

**EMERGENCIES**

In case of an emergency and outside of work hours, please call our Campus Security Office at #253-566-5111. The Campus Security staff has our personal phone numbers and will be able to get a hold of a staff member of International Student Services and Programs. Please only do so in case of an emergency that cannot wait until the next workday or until after the weekend.

The following clinics and hospitals will accept the Tacoma Community College insurance and most likely also many plans from other countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinics – minor injury or illness</th>
<th>Hospitals/ER – serious injury or illness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Place Urgent Care</td>
<td>Allenmore Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4310 Bridgeport Way W.</td>
<td>South 19th Street and Union Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (253) 459-7177</td>
<td>Phone: (253) 459-6633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday through Friday 9am to 9pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Sunday, Holidays* 9am to 5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westgate Urgent Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5702 North 26th Street</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (253) 459-7130</td>
<td>1718 South I Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday through Friday 9am to 9pm</td>
<td>Phone: (253) 426-4101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Sunday, Holidays* 9am to 5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma General Hospital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315 Martin Luther King Jr. Way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (253) 403-1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BASIC IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

In order to study at Tacoma Community College or any other educational institution, students must comply with rules set forth by the USCIS. Admission requirements for international students differ from those for American students because of these rules. International students must prove that they are not only academically capable, but also that they are financially prepared to live in the U.S. As part of the admission process, students must submit a bank statement which proves they have enough money to pay tuition and living expenses for at least one year.

After a student has been accepted for admission to the college, the office of International Student Services and Programs at Tacoma Community College issues this student a form called an I-20. This document is proof that the student has met all admission requirements and plans to pursue a normal, full-time course of study. A student must have an I-20 to apply for a student visa. Most apply for an F-1 visa, a designation given only to full-time international students. So, in addition to a passport issued by the home country, a student must have a visa from the U.S. government and an I-20 from Tacoma Community College to enter the U.S. and attend school.

International students must attend classes on a full-time basis (at least 12 credit hours per quarter) and show normal academic progress in order to maintain good standing with the USCIS. A minimum 2.0 grade point average (GPA) must be maintained. When a student fails to meet these standards, s/he is considered to be out of immigration status. If his or her GPA does not improve the following quarter, the student will be placed on probation. Suspension occurs when a student consistently fails to maintain the minimum required GPA, or fails his/her classes completely. Once a student has been suspended, he/she is no longer in good standing with the US, and may have to leave the country.

If International students travel outside the US, they must have a DSO officer (in ISSP office) sign their I-20 before they leave. Students can bring their I-20 to the front desk at the International Students Programs and pick-up the signed copy three working days later. Some students will need a special visa to travel to Canada, Mexico or another country other than the US or their own.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES & PROGRAMS

International Student Services and Programs (ISSP) is the center for all programs and activities for international students at Tacoma Community College. Assistance is available for virtually all aspects of student life including: academics, immigration regulations, visas, advising, activities, and living arrangements. Students and hosts should direct any questions to these offices.

International Student Services and Programs
6501 South 19th Street
Tacoma, WA 98466
Office: 253-566-5190
Fax: 253-566-6027
Email: international@tacomcc.edu

Homestay Program
Phone: (253) 566-5381
Email: amartin@tacomacc.edu

Campus Security: (253) 566-5111

THANK YOU!

Tacoma Community College appreciates the participation of students and hosts in the Homestay program. This exchange is the basis for true global education. Thank you for promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding!
## VACATION - PRORATED FEE

**example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>11/27/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name Student:</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SID:</td>
<td>970-xx-xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for vacation:</td>
<td>12/18/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return from vacation:</td>
<td>01/04/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Daily Fee:</td>
<td>Fee per month/30 = $18.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation Fee</td>
<td>$3.30/day or $100/month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vacation fee only applicable if all of the following:
* If the student gives the Homestay Coordinator 2 weeks’ notice
* If the student goes on vacation for 10 or more days in a row
* If the vacation is during scheduled TCC vacation times (summer quarter, breaks between quarters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December:</th>
<th># of days:</th>
<th>Fee:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days in Homestay before vacation - full fee</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$18.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days on vacation - vacation rate:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total December (rounded to whole $)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January:</th>
<th># of days:</th>
<th>Fee:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days on vacation - vacation rate:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days on vacation - full fee:</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$18.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total January (rounded to whole $)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student will pay his/her host before s/he goes on vacation. If the student does not pay the homestay fee before his/her vacation, the complete homestay fee will be charged. During the student’s vacation his/her room cannot be used to place other students and the student can leave his/her belongings in the room. When the student returns from vacation s/he can move back into the room. If the student does not return from vacation on the indicated date, s/he will have to contact the Homestay Coordinator and will lose the right to move back into his/her room and either:
1) pay the full homestay fee for the entire quarter to reserve his/her room or
2) arrange for somebody to pack up his/her belongings and store them so another student can be placed in the room.

If 2 weeks after the indicated return date the quarterly fee has not been paid or the students’ belongings are not collected by a friend or relative, the host and TCC have the right to remove the students’ belongings and dispose them.

---

Student Signature

Housing Coordinator Signature
Quarterly Homestay Commitment Contract

This quarterly commitment counts for every quarter that you are staying with your host, not just your first quarter. Read carefully and initial:

_______ I am placed with my host family for the entire quarter. I will not be able to move during the quarter unless I have permission from the Housing Coordinator. I understand I can move to another Homestay or apartment at the end of each quarter.

_______ If I plan to move out, I will inform the Housing Coordinator and my host family at least 4 weeks before the end of the quarter.

_______ If I move before the end of the quarter without the permission of the Housing Coordinator, I will have to pay the homestay fee for the remainder of the quarter to my host family. I also understand that in this case I am no longer eligible to participate in the housing program and the Housing Coordinator will not be able to assist me with housing.

_______ If I have any questions or concerns, I will talk to the host family and/or the Housing Coordinator directly.

Name __________________________________________________________

SID # __________________________________________________________

Date ___________________ Signature _______________________________

After you fill out this form, return it as soon as possible to the Housing Coordinator in Building 11, room 210.