



Nanaimo Christian School

Belong- Believe-Achieve

Nanaimo Christian School International Student Program

Homestay Program Guide

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Nanaimo Christian School Mission Statement:



In community, NCS pursues Christ-centered educational excellence that equips students to live Biblically, act responsibly, work cooperatively, communicate effectively and achieve success in who God has called them to be.

Core Values:

1. Nanaimo Christian School is a **Christian community** – everything that we do and teach is rooted in the Christian faith and founded upon God and His Word. We desire to partner with families in the education and spiritual growth of our students.
2. Nanaimo Christian School is a **community of grace** – we go beyond just rules and consequences in order to reach the hearts of our students and inspire Christ-like transformation.
3. Nanaimo Christian School is **responsive** – we recognize the uniqueness of each student and strive to exceed expectations and provide a positive school experience for all.
4. Nanaimo Christian School is a **safe haven** – we commit to provide an environment where students are protected both physically and emotionally, and provide a loving atmosphere where they can safely grow into the person God has called them to be.
5. Nanaimo Christian School is **forward-thinking** – we value innovation and strive to discover the best practices for student learning.
6. Nanaimo Christian School is **intentional** – we lead, serve, and teach with great passion because we are confident in what God has called us to do. We work to cultivate that same passion in every one of our students.

Nanaimo Christian School (NCS) is located on a spacious and centrally located campus in the beautiful city of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. It offers a quality academic program, small class sizes, a fully accredited staff and many other extra opportunities not available in a larger school. The small city setting of Nanaimo provides a safe and pleasant environment for International students.

International students who attend Nanaimo Christian School comment that the love and concern they feel from teachers and the support and community they feel amongst the students are the two big reasons why NCS is such a great place to be!

The Lord has created humans with the wonderful ability to communicate and the ability to use this gift to glorify Him. Our goal at Nanaimo Christian School is to enable new students to discover and develop the ability to communicate in English and come to appreciate the structure and principles of the English Language. As students grow in their knowledge of English, they are able to share with others in the classroom and thereby enrich the whole body by the diversity of their experiences.

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Statement of Philosophical Foundation

The basis of the Society for Christian Education in Nanaimo is the infallible Word of God. The Society is committed to the following educational principles:

- The instruction and education of children in the school, as well as in the home, must be in accordance with the Word of God.
- Although the church and the state have their own peculiar interests in the school, the school is not an institution dependent on or belonging to the church or the state, but it depends on and proceeds from the home.
- Throughout the entire course of the child's education, the fundamental unity of the school and the home must be maintained through regular parental contacts.
- The child's training must be of a high standard to equip them to be all God wants them to be as caretakers and reconcilers.

We are involved in a challenging task—instructing, modelling, facilitating enabling, directing, and nurturing God's children so that they may be equipped to face their Kingdom responsibilities. We could list many objectives. We know that without God's Spirit to guide us we could not even begin to do our work.

Goal of the Homestay Program

The goal of the Nanaimo Christian School Homestay Program is to provide a safe, supportive, English-speaking, Christian, family environment for international students attending the school. Our goal is to select host families who meet these criteria. Parents of international students, together with host parents, are encouraged to provide consistency between the home and school so that the vision of the school is supported and advanced.

An excellent homestay environment allows students to improve their English skills within a positive, family environment. It also gives students an opportunity to experience Canadian culture and traditions. It is our prayer that students will have a rich experience and that they will see Christ both in the family and at school.

We believe that these guidelines encourage excellent communication and understanding between homestay parents and their students. We also realize that difficulties and differences will be a part of this process and we are committed to supporting host families and international students with issues that may arise.

Becoming a Host Family at Nanaimo Christian School

Becoming a host family in the Nanaimo Christian School International Program requires the following:

- living in a way that reflects a belief in the Triune God
- completing the Homestay Application Form available from our Homestay Coordinator
- receiving an initial home inspection by the Homestay Coordinator
- submitting a current criminal record checks for all adults living in the home; the fees for this are to be paid by host family
- Reference checks when required
- mandatory attendance at the annual Orientation Meeting
- bi-annual home visits or interviews by the NCS International staff

Homestay families should be cautioned against depending on income from homestay fees in order to balance their family budget. The school is not obliged to place or replace a student or reimburse fees for perceived lost income.

A community care licence will be required under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (the “CCALA”) if a host family cares for three or more persons in his/her home. (Mandated by BC Ministry of Education 2015)

How Students Are Placed

International students are asked to complete a Homestay Information Form and write a short letter of introduction to their prospective host family. As much as possible, their requests are taken into consideration when the Homestay Coordinator determines placement. However, even if requested, it will not always be possible to match a student with a host family having children in the same age range as the student. In every case, the Homestay Coordinator will make every effort to provide the best situation for the student. Ordinarily, we do not place more than one student per home. Where there is an exception, students must be of the same sex and have a different first language. A host family is not permitted to have more than two students. If a host family has a student placement

through another agency, the Homestay Coordinator must be informed. Our Homestay Program complies with the [MOE Homestay Guidelines 2018](#)



Family Life – What to Expect

Our host families want to host students because they are interested in other cultures and want students to be a part of their family; the experience should not be just room and board. Host parents look out for the students' best interests and will help them stay safe and healthy, encourage them in their schoolwork, and guide them as they grow as children of God.



As a general guideline, host families are asked to treat their students as they would one of their children. Using this guideline helps families determine not only what they would expect of the student, but also what the student should expect of them.

Students must have their own room, which should include an adequate study area. The room should be supplied with a bed, dresser, closet, mattress, pillow, bed linens, lamp, chair, desk, and internet access. Host families should respect the privacy of the student's room and everyone in the household should respect each other's property.

Students and host parents will need to talk about how much time they will want to spend alone. It's important to find a good balance between respecting each other's privacy and

spending too much time alone. It would be impolite and unwise for students to spend too much of their time behind closed doors writing or talking in their own language at the cost of taking part in family life, getting to know others and improving their English skills.

English should be spoken whenever the student is present.

Daily Life – What to Expect

Inside the Home

Bathroom Use

Canadian bathroom routines can be very different. Some of the main differences are that Canadians typically:

- prefer taking showers to baths
- often shower in the morning
- bathe inside the bathtub
drain and clean the tub after use
- have no drain in the bathroom floor
- keep the bathroom floor dry
- shower once per day



Some important bathroom related things to keep in mind:

- There should be clear expectations concerning who can shower or bathe when and for how long.
- Students shouldn't be required to wait until their host parents have showered before taking their shower or bath. Leaving enough hot water for other people in the family is important.
- Showers should not be taken late in the evening if it disturbs the host family.
- Toilet paper, soap and towels will be provided by the host family. Students need to supply their own personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and moisturizing cream. The student's personal items should not be used by other members of the host family without permission.
- A host parent should talk to the student about what can and can't be flushed down the toilet.
- Although it might be embarrassing, a plugged toilet is something to report, not something to hide. Students should never attempt to fix problems in the bathroom.
- The bathroom should be clean and dry after every use.

Celebrations

Living in a Canadian homestay allows students to gain an understanding of Canadian celebrations and traditions. Students are encouraged to share in their host family and extended family's celebrations.

Chores

It is reasonable to ask the student, as a member of the family, to clean and vacuum his/her room as well as clean the bathroom after using it. In addition, it is reasonable to ask students to assist with small daily chores like:

- setting or clearing the table
- washing dishes or tidying the kitchen
- taking out the garbage or recycling
- picking up personal items and keeping them in the bedroom
- doing their personal laundry
- making their own breakfast and lunch

It is not reasonable to expect students to help with

- babysitting
- doing heavy cleaning or garden work
- cooking meals (unless they offer to do so)



Church Attendance

Students are expected to attend church with their host family regularly. It's also great to encourage them (but not require them) to become involved in youth group activities. There may be times when a student wants to attend an ethnic church. Although this is acceptable, it should not take the place of regular attendance at the host family's church.

Curfew

Curfews are dependent on age and at the discretion of the host family. It's important that both the student and the host parents negotiate reasonable expectations in this area.

Normally, evenings are meant for studying, spending time with the host family or participating in school, church or community events.

Bedtime is exactly that – time for bed and time to sleep. Bedtime does not mean time to use devices for gaming or connecting with family and friends.



Damaged Property

Host parents should review their home insurance policy with respect to liability and coverage.

In the process of normal living, household accidents may occur that do damage to household property. If a homestay student is involved in a household accident that is deemed to be an accident, but results in property damage, then the following should be considered:

- What would you charge your own child – the entire amount, the insurance deductible, or some amount in-between or lower?
- If the damage is a result of negligent or destructive behavior, the student may be expected to pay the deductible up to \$900.00.
- The host family will not be held responsible for loss of property or physical harm incurred except in the case where Canadian Law has been breached.
- The host family will not hold the employees and board of the school responsible for any inconvenience or property damage, or physical harm incurred and received by the student.



Food

The host family is expected to provide three meals a day, as well as snacks. Typical meals may include:

- Breakfast: usually a light, quick meal: bread with jam, honey or peanut butter; muffins; cereal with milk; fruit; yogurt. Sometimes, often on weekends or holidays, host families may prepare larger breakfasts of eggs, bacon, pancakes or waffles.
- Lunch: Canadian students often prepare their own lunches. This may include a sandwich, bun or bagel with meat or cheese, fruit, yogurt, raw vegetables, and cookies.
- Supper: usually some combination of any of the following foods – soup, meat, cooked vegetables, salad, and rice, pasta or potatoes.

Further Thoughts about Food:

- It is recommended that host families take their students grocery shopping in order to learn their likes and dislikes. Host families may invite their student to share their culture by preparing a meal or dish for their family.
- Students should not be permitted to eat meals in their bedroom. Be sure that it is clear where food may or may not be eaten.
- Students may want to buy their own snacks. Discuss where they should store their food.
- Students are encouraged to be honest about the amount of food they receive, and host parents are wise to ask whether the student has had enough. In Canada, it is very acceptable to have second helpings.
- Students should be adventurous about trying unfamiliar foods. However, host families should not insist that students eat food they dislike.
- Students are expected to be at home in the evenings to eat with their host families. If the student is going to be away, a reasonable notice should be given to the host family. Be sure that everyone understands what reasonable is.
- Host families may begin supper by praying, talk while they are eating, and close the meal time by reading from the Bible or a devotional.
- Students are encouraged to bring favourite recipes from your home country

Homestay Fees and Miscellaneous Fees

Unless other arrangements have been made, a monthly homestay cheque of \$900.00 will be mailed to the homestay for the beginning of each month or direct deposit to your account. Please make sure that the Homestay Coordinator has your correct mailing address or banking information. The monthly fee enables host families to recover the costs of housing and feeding an additional person. No prepaid lump sum payments are permitted. Homestay parents may not charge students for additional expenses unless the Homestay Coordinator has been notified and agrees to the expense.

Fees recognize the cost of:

- food
- daily transportation to school, including school events and early morning or after school classes (an additional driving fee may be requested if students are involved in activities that require driving more than 3 times per week)
- utilities
- preparing a comfortable bedroom that meets requirements

Students are expected to pay for:

- All extra-curricular activities such as sports teams
- All activities that are associated with your own interests
- Vacations and special outings including restaurants

If a student leaves the homestay for more than 5 consecutive nights, the \$28.00 per night homestay rate is reduced to \$14 per night. If the student returns to their home country during the summer, they can pack up their belongings and clean their room so that the homestay can use their room. The host family will find a location where the student can store these belongings. In this scenario, the student will *not* be expected to pay the reduced rate. If the student insists that their room be left “as is”, and this is agreeable to the host family, the student will be required to pay the \$15 per night rate for the duration of the summer.

Storage and Moving Fees- If students need to store belongings over the summer months, a storage fee of \$50 per month will apply. If Homestay families help in the moving of student supplies, a mileage fee of \$.45 per km and \$25 per hour for packing and moving of student supplies will apply.

Host families may not charge any additional fees other than those outlined above. If requests are made for things beyond the scope of the homestay’s responsibilities, please check with the International Program Coordinator regarding appropriate charges.

If conflicts arise between a student and members of the host family and the situation is deemed unresolvable, a student will be allowed to change homestay. A minimum notice of

two weeks is required. Normally, if a student requests a homestay re-placement, the student will be charged \$300.00.

Resolving Conflicts

Living with others can present problems. Problems and conflicts happen in all families and can be solved when everyone commits to understanding each other's expectations and needs. Communication is key to sorting out misunderstandings whether caused by cultural differences, communication difficulties, or other conflicting personal traits.

In most cases, if you have a problem or a misunderstanding with one another, you should:

- tell each other about how you feel
- tell each other what you need
- encourage each other to express their feelings and needs
- use questions and verification techniques to facilitate communication

Problems of a more sensitive nature should be communicated to the Homestay Coordinator.

Re-placing students is not the first response when problems arise between host families and international students. The Homestay Coordinator or the International Program Coordinator will always insist that host families and students engage in open and honest conversation. A facilitated meeting may be arranged so that issues can be discussed. It is only when conflicts appear unresolvable that students will be placed in a new home. Ordinarily, when the request to be replaced comes from the student, there will be a \$250 homestay re-placement fee.

Telephone and Internet

We live in a digital age. At Nanaimo Christian School, we try to teach students how to be responsible with their digital devices. International students are required to follow the guidelines their host family has in place regarding the use of the internet. It is recommended that a time in the evening is set when all digital devices are turned off. It is reasonable that students would be required to bring all devices to a designated spot or at an arranged time. The following rules should be discussed with your student:

- All devices (laptops, phones tablets etc) need to be at a designated place by 9:30pm or an agreed upon time depending on the student's age
- It is not appropriate to have devices/electronics at the dinner table.
- Plan on doing a family activity with your home-stay family after dinner–**No electronics**



- There is a **maximum of 2 hours of screen time (this doesn't include homework)** This includes **Skyping with your family and friends, texting to friends and playing video games.**
- When should your student arrange times to Skype with their family? Please keep in mind the time differences. Skyping should not be longer than 30-45 minutes.
- Nanaimo Christian School does not allow international students to be playing violent video games. League of Legends and other addicting video games are not permitted to be played during the school year. Your host family must agree with all the games you play.

Outside the Home

Academic Support

Academic standards at Nanaimo Christian School are high and, as a result, students will require help at home with assignments from time to time. International Program coordinators and staff are in constant communication with students' teachers and will decide, based on student marks, attitude and ability, if additional tutoring outside of school time would be beneficial. Additional adult tutoring may be arranged at an additional cost to the student. Staff will work with host families to find times and places that are convenient for all.

Community service and daily physical activity is a requirement for graduation and may require parental support.



Driver's Licenses and Ownership of Vehicles

While in the Nanaimo Christian School homestay program, international students are only permitted to get their driver's license and drive a vehicle with the permission of the parents, custodian, the host parents and the International Program Coordinator. Under NO circumstance are International students permitted to drive the homestay vehicle. Students are permitted to take driving lessons through on [ICBC trained driving instructor](#).

Family Holidays or Travel

If a host family wants to include their student in a family holiday they should get permission from the student's parents and International Coordinator. Clear expectations about who pays the student's travel expenses should be communicated to the student's parents. If a decision is made not to include the student in the activity, it is the responsibility of



the host family to make alternate arrangements that are acceptable to everyone. Host families are expected to remunerate substitute families at the rate of \$30 per night.

The International Program Coordinator must be informed about all alternate arrangements.

If you plan to travel to the USA, please ensure that that you have an appropriate travel visa.

Medical Insurance

All international students at NCS are enrolled in the BC Medical Service Plan called MSP. There is a wait period of 4 months to receive MSP and in the meantime all students receive medical insurance through Guard Me. You will be provided with a medical card number to be used if your student needs to see a doctor. Students are encouraged to use [Mobile Doctor through Guard Me](#) for non-urgent issues.

Students/homestay families may need to pay up front and then submit receipts to Guard Me. For support, please see the International Coordinator.

If your student requires costly emergency medical attention, it is advised to contact Guard Me for advice at 1-877-873-8447 or after hours at 1-905-731-8291.

Emotional Support

Due to being away from home and navigating an unfamiliar culture, International Students can often be under a lot of stress, thereby experiencing anxiety and/or depression. Homestay families are required to report to the school immediately if they hear language/ phrases/ topics that might be concerning a student's mental health or life. In addition, if the student is taking mood altering drugs like anti-depression or anti-anxiety medication, this must be reported to the school.

Students experiencing mental health difficulties are encouraged to seek help from the school's counsellors. Guard Me also provides 8 free sessions with a certified counselor which can be used during their 4 months with the Guard Me insurance plan. After this time, then can continue counseling services but may have to pay on their own for this. Nanaimo works with the following Guard Me counselor:

C.Lei Counseling

5973 Waterdon Drive
Nanaimo, V9T 6A9, **Phone:** 250-797-9735

In addition, please note the following resources:



BC Helpline for Children (1-800-663-9122)- May be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected. There is a legal duty to report your concern to the child welfare worker.

Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868)- Counselling and mental health support

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre (keltymentalhealth.ca)- Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living.

Outings

International students must inform their host families when making plans to go out on a free day or afternoon. The student must make sure the host family knows where he/she is at all times. If a student is staying overnight at a friend or family's place, the host family needs to have the name, address and phone number of the friend's parents. A host family may refuse permission for their student to participate in some activities. Reasons for their refusal could include concern for safety, conflict with family plans, or the amount of homework a student has.

If students choose to visit a nearby city on the weekend, they are required to obtain permission from their host families, parents, and notify the International Program Coordinator and meet the following requirements:

- Provide all contact information of where they will be going, how long they are planning to be away, who they will be travelling with, what they are planning on doing while they are away, and what mode of transportation they will be using to get to and from their destination. This information must be provided to the International Program Coordinator. Students are not permitted to travel until the International Program Coordinator has approved the request.
- Stay with a relative or another responsible adult over the age of 25. Students are not permitted to stay in hotels or to stay in homes with students of the opposite gender.
- Carry a cell phone and emergency contact numbers in case of problems.

All school policies must be adhered to. Drinking, drug use, and any other illegal or immoral activity is absolutely prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion. Incomplete school work or a poor work ethic school could be reasons for denying a request for going on an outing.



Direct permission from the student's parents is required if students go on a non-school trip in which they:

- stay away for the night without the homestay family

In these cases, the school will:

- arrange for a phone call to the parents.
- require a letter from the parents authorizing their child to travel under these circumstances.

Restaurants

Host families may enjoy dining out from time to time. If this replaces a regular mealtime, the host family should include the student and pay for the meal. In a special circumstance where a host family may be unable to invite the student to join a restaurant meal or pay for it, it is critical to clearly communicate with the student about the reason why. In these cases, there must be an option for the student to remain at home and have a prepared meal provided.



School Absences

If sick, students must have permission from their host parent to be absent from school. Host parents must notify the school office and International Coordinator when the student is ill.

Students should not miss school for vacations. When booking flights home for holidays, students should refer to the school calendar to avoid missing instructional days.

School Trips

With the exception of meal expenses, host families are not expected to cover the costs of school trips.

Waivers will be sent for all field trips. The custodian, parents or the International Coordinator may sign waivers depending on the prearranged agreement.

Transportation

Host families will ensure that students have transportation to and from school. It is reasonable to expect students to walk to school if the home is two kilometres or less from school.



If the student needs to take the city or school bus to school, the host family is responsible for arranging and paying for the bus pass.

Host parents should be available to drive students to activities at the school, church or in the community. It is important to make polite requests in a reasonable amount of time. (An additional driving fee may be requested. See above) Except in emergency situations, host families should not expect their students to take a taxi.

It is reasonable for students to expect their host family to drive them to and pick them up from the airport, ferry or bus terminal.

NOTE: Nowhere is the guideline “What would you do for your own children?” more relevant than in the area of transportation.

Miscellaneous

Students may not make significant purchases without the permission of the Host family, parents or the International Program Coordinator. The International Program Coordinator reserves the right to decline permission to make the requested purchase.

Host families are expected to cover costs incurred as a result of students being involved in a family activity (for example, going to a movie). The host family is not expected to pay similar costs when the student goes out with friends.

Host families must inform the Homestay Coordinator of all residents and pets in the household. Please notify the Homestay Coordinator of all changes to the household.

If students invite guests to their homestay, it should be done with the knowledge and permission of the host family.

Behaviours to Avoid

In Canada it is a criminal offense to:

- use alcohol under the age of 19,
- smoke under the age of 18
- use marijuana under the age of 19,
- use illegal drugs at any time

If students commit any of these offences, they will be dealt with by the RCMP and/or Immigration Canada. Homestay parents are not held accountable for offences committed by students.

International students studying at a pre-university/college level are not permitted to have a paying job in Canada.



Host families will have reasonable guidelines in place to direct the behaviour of all members of the household. If, after repeated warnings, students continue to disobey the homestay guidelines, they may be asked by the school to withdraw from the school program. If the student believes that the host family is asking them to do something unreasonable, inappropriate or uncomfortable, they should contact the Homestay Coordinator.

Final Words

The way to make the most of the homestay experience is for everyone to come with an open mind and understanding heart. Students should come prepared to participate in family life and share in the responsibilities of being a family member. Hosts should be ready to welcome the student into the family and encourage them to be involved in the life of the family. Mutual understanding, sensitivity and trust will go a long way to ensuring a positive experience for everyone.

