



Billanook College
International Student
Homestay Policy Handbook
2017



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Welcome to Our Homestay Program

Billanook College welcomes students from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, both for the relatively short term student exchange experience and as full time, fee paying members of our College community.

It is our firm belief that international students gain most from this educational opportunity when they are able to live with, and be under the care of, an Australian family. In rare circumstances, where the student may have an approved adult relative living within close proximity of the College, consideration may be given to the student residing with that relative as long as they, as host family, agree to accept all terms and conditions of the Homestay Program.

On occasion, the Student Recruitment Agent who is often the primary source of enrolment, will choose to organise accommodation for the student on a fee for service basis, in accordance with College approval. This accommodation must be within adequate proximity to the College.

In the vast majority of cases, Billanook College will undertake to select an appropriate homestay family for international students, once their enrolment at the College is confirmed. Where possible, the wishes of the international student and their parents are sought and considered in the matching of the student to a specific homestay family. Prospective homestay families are carefully sourced and selected on a range of criteria, including:

- motivation for undertaking this important function
- previous experience with young people of different cultures
- family structure
- the level of care and supervision able to be offered
- suitability of the homestay location and facilities
- the time and effort the homestay family members may be able to devote to this function

Ideally, the homestay families become a wonderful source of support for the international student, as they adjust to our cultural differences, way of life and educational system in Australia. Homestay accommodation is co-ordinated by the College in the interests of providing safety, security and stability for international students undertaking studies with us, and in accordance with all student welfare regulations imposed by law.

As Billanook College issues the Confirmation of Approved Accommodation and Welfare for the vast majority of international students under the age of 18, it is to be noted that the College accepts full responsibility for monitoring such arrangements in the interests of the welfare of the student. International Students are NOT permitted to make their own accommodation and welfare arrangements. It is a Condition of Enrolment that such arrangements are to remain in place for the full duration of enrolment regardless of the student's age.

This booklet outlines the Homestay Policy of the Billanook College Homestay Program. We trust that this information will be of great support as the international student and the homestay family commence the process of forming a mutually rewarding relationship throughout their homestay arrangement.

Please do not hesitate to direct questions relating to any homestay or College matter to Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer.

Finally, we wish all parties to the homestay arrangement, the student, their parents and the homestay family members, well as they reap the benefits to be gained from this experience.

Mission

As a School in the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia, our Mission is to develop a dynamic, caring, learning community which fosters the growth of the whole being of each girl and boy - in body, mind and spirit; providing a range of pathways to life-long learning through and beyond academic excellence.



Roger Oates
PRINCIPAL



Steven Lingard
MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

College Contacts

Principal	Roger Oates	9724 1179	registrar@billanook.vic.edu.au
Registrar	Josephine Reed	9724 1179	registrar@billanook.vic.edu.au
Manager, International Programs	Steven Lingard	9724 1166 0421 993 571	steven.lingard@billanook.vic.edu.au
Homestay Officer	Roxanne Chung	0407 543 338	homestayofficer@billanook.vic.edu.au
International Student Programs Officer	Debra Kane	0409 331 380	debra.kane@billanook.vic.edu.au
Deputy Principal and Head of Senior School	Belinda Vertriest Years 10 – 12	9724 1115	catrina.coraci@billanook.vic.edu.au
Head of Middle School	Nick Owen Years 7 – 9	9724 1136	secmid@billanook.vic.edu.au
Absence Line	Senior School	9724 4224	
Absence Line	Middle School	9724 4225	
International Programs and Transport Officer	Sue Bidwell	9724 1102	sue.bidwell@billanook.vic.edu.au
Weekend Driver Service	Rita Setford	0425 766 848	rita.setford@billanook.vic.edu.au

Semester 1, Terms 1 and 2 Dates 2017

Term 1

Staff Commence	Monday 23 January Years 7 and 12
Students Commence	Wednesday 25 January
Australia Day Holiday	Thursday 26 January
Years 7 and 12 Students	Friday 27 January
Term 1 Commence	Monday 30 January
Labour Day Holiday	Monday 13 March
EXIT Week - Years 10 and 11 students	Monday 27 to Friday 31 March
Term 1 concludes	Friday 31 March

Term 2

Term 2 Commence	Monday 18 April
ANZAC Day Holiday	Tuesday 25 April
Student Free Day – Staff Report Writing Day	Monday 12 June
Friday 16 June Term 2 concludes	Friday 30 June

Semester 2, Terms 3 and 4 Dates 2017

Term 3

Staff PD Week	Monday 17 - Friday 21 July
Year 12 Students commence	Wednesday 19 July
Normal classes commence for whole school	Monday 24 July
EXIT Week - Years 10 and 11 students	Monday 18 to Friday 22 September
Term 3 concludes	Friday 22 September

Term 4

Staff and students commence	Monday 9 October
Cup Exeat	Monday 6 November
Melbourne Cup Day	Tuesday 7 November
EXIT Week - Years 10 and 11 Students	Monday 20 to Friday 24 November
Valedictory Dinner	Friday 24 November
Student Free Day - Staff Report Writing Day	Monday 28 November
Term 4 concludes	Thursday 14 December

Important Term Break Information

Year 12 Students are **STRONGLY ADVISED NOT** to return to their home country during the academic year. If there is a desire to return to their home country this can **ONLY** occur in the first two weeks of the mid-year term break in July.

Year 12 Students are required to attend Billanook College until Friday 24 November – the date of the Valedictory Dinner. They may book flights to return home after this date.

Years 7 to 11 Students may **ONLY** return to their home country in the mid-year term break period evening of June 30 – morning of July 23 as specified in the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.

Requests for students to return to their home countries at any other times must be made in writing for **SPECIAL LEAVE** by a parent on compelling and compassionate grounds.

Years 7 to 11 Students must attend Billanook College until Thursday 14 December, being the completion of the 2017 Academic Year.

Timetable Structure and After-School Tuition

Period 1	8:40am to 9:40am
Changeover	9:40am to 9:45am
Period 2	9:45am to 10:45am
Recess	10:45am to 11:05am
Period 3	11:05am to 12:05pm
Changeover	12:05pm to 12:10pm
Period 4	12:10pm to 1:10pm

1:05pm finish for sport on Wednesdays for Seniors and Thursdays for Middle

Lunch	1:10pm to 2:00pm
Period 5	2:00pm to 3:00pm
Homegroup	3:00pm to 3:15pm

Timetabled Physical Education Classes

All Years 7 to 10 students undertake Physical Education as a mandatory subject. Homestay families are advised to become aware of which days in the student timetable the students shall need to access their laundered College Sports Uniform.

Timetabled Sport Days - finish times will vary. Students are to check sport notices on MyConnect

Year 7 students MUST remember to bring College Sports Uniform with them on Mondays.

Years 8 and 9 students MUST remember to bring College Sports Uniform with them on Thursdays.

Years 10 and 11 students MUST remember to bring College Sports Uniform with them on Wednesdays.

Academic Support Program

Billanook College offers a range of academic support programs to our International Students during School Term times including:

Monday Afternoons	3:30pm to 6:00pm – VCE Chinese First
Wednesday Afternoons (Year 11 only)	3:30pm to 5:00pm – VCE English (EAL)
Support Thursday Afternoons	3:30pm to 5:00pm – Homework Club

Homestay Program

The homestay arrangement, while facilitated by Billanook College, is an agreement between the International Student and his/her parent/bi-lingual local support person with the homestay parent/s.

Terms and Conditions

Billanook College sets in place the base *Terms and Conditions of the Homestay Agreement*, as specified herein and neither party is to attempt to introduce any change to these Terms and Conditions without the knowledge and consent of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer. (refer to Page 16).

Full Board Provisions

Provision of *full board* is expected in return for the homestay fee payable by the student. This implies that:

- all meals will be provided seven days per week for the student;
- the student has relatively free access to household food supplies, example, fresh fruit and other snacks between meals, as considered reasonable;
- homestay family supply all household consumables such as toilet paper and tissues (*students may choose to provide their own toiletries*)
- reasonable internet access is available, the cost of which is included in your homestay fee.

In the event the internet access is not considered adequate by the student, they should speak to the Homestay Officer.

To overcome any dietary differences, ask the student to come shopping with you in the earliest stages of the homestay arrangement so that food likes and dislikes can be resolved. This will also help the student to gain an appreciation of the true cost of additional food provision.

As a guide, homestay families should expect to spend approximately 60% of the weekly homestay fee on additional food, household supplies and household energy consumption.

Role of the Homestay Officer

The Homestay Officer will regularly discuss and review the progress of the homestay arrangement with either or both parties. Both the International Student and the parent/bi-lingual local support person should feel welcome to contact the Homestay Officer with questions or concerns regarding the homestay arrangement. Equally, homestay parents are encouraged to raise any issues of concern, at any stage, with the Homestay Officer. It is important to understand that most difficulties can be addressed by prompt, honest and open communication on the issue.

The Homestay Officer will use discretion in attempting to resolve any difficulties associated with the homestay arrangement and may call upon the assistance of the College Principal, as deemed necessary.



Roxanne Chung
Homestay Officer

The Homestay Officer undertakes to:

- source, select and prepare prospective homestay families for this important function;
- be accessible at all reasonable times (no later than 9.00pm) for both the homestay family and the students should there be any issue of concern requiring intervention, advice or assistance;
- phone calls/contact after 9.00pm should only be made in urgent/exceptional circumstances;
- in any instance where the Homestay Officer knows in advance that she will not be accessible, an alternative College staff member will be delegated this function and communication of contact details will occur via email to the homestay family before these alternative arrangements are put into place;
- regularly initiate communication with both the student and the homestay parent on the progress of the homestay arrangement;
- brief the Manager, International Programs and/ or College Leadership on any issues relating to the homestay placement that may require the Manager's input or counsel;
- be the initial arbiter on any matter of dispute relating to the homestay arrangement;
- communicate with the student's bi-lingual local support person on any matter relating to the welfare of the student in the homestay placement or within the College in general, as deemed necessary;
- co-ordinate or facilitate the relocation of the student to a new homestay residence where deemed necessary.

Role of the Manager, International Programs

- Monitor the need for growth in our Homestay Program in light of forward enrolments;
- Contribute to the development of the Billanook College Homestay policies and procedures;
- Consult with the Homestay Officer on current matters arising for students in Homestay placements and for families as Homestay providers;
- Advise the Homestay Officer on resolution of disputes.

Ultimately, all decisions regarding the Accommodation and Welfare of International Students rests with the Manager, International Programs in consultation with the College Principal.

Weekend Driver Service

Many of our students now undertake Language Classes, Tutorial Sessions and short study related programs on weekends, necessitating train travel. In addition, the students do travel on trains and enjoy social activities and hobbies with their friends.

In the interests of student safety and to encourage return to Homestay at an acceptable time, the College has employed a Weekend Driver who is available to meet the students at Mooroolbark Station in the College bus and who shall then transport the students directly back to their Homestay residence. This service operates at the following times:

Friday Evenings	7:30pm – 9:07pm
Saturday Evenings	7:30pm – 9:07pm
Sunday Evenings	6:00pm – 7:04pm

Students should be home by NO LATER THAN 9.45 on Friday and Saturday evenings and NO LATER THAN 7.45 on Sunday evenings.

Billanook College reserves the right to review these times throughout the year. Any changes would be communicated to the Homestay families and students.

PLEASE NOTE:

The 9.07pm train is the final train for Friday and Saturday evenings and the 7.04pm train is the final train for Sunday evenings. Students must be in by the specified times to be collected from Mooroolbark station. The weekend bus service is unable to operate after these times. Students will have to contact their Homestay family to collect them should they not be back by the specified times. The College will use its discretion in relation to disciplinary action for students who return home outside these times.

Billanook College strictly prohibits our International Students from utilising taxis, UBER and transportation by friends in private vehicles.

Role of the Bi-Lingual Local Support Person

Billanook College requires that all students have in place a bi-lingual local support person who is independent of both the Homestay and the College.

In most cases, the bi-lingual local support person is appointed by the College to perform a number of important functions including:

- being accessible to the overseas parent for advice on the academic progress and personal welfare of the student;
- attending College information evenings and parent/teacher interviews;
- being the point of contact for teachers concerned with the academic progress of the student;
- meeting the students on a regular basis during the College day for discussion on their progress;
- receiving and translating school reports and letters for the understanding of the parent;
- assisting the College with its overall responsibility for the welfare of the student;
- liaising with the student in relation to transportation arrangements to and from the airport.

Please Note: As part of the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment, parents of International Students shall be offered access to a Local Support Person provided by International Student Alliance - Guardianship and Welfare Services (ISA). All costs of this service are borne by Billanook College. In some cases, the parents choose to appoint a bi-lingual Local Support Person independently, at their own expense. Homestay parents shall be advised of the identity and contact details of the Local Support Person in either case.

Homestay Family Expectations

It is policy that homestay families shall provide accommodation to no more than two International Students. Students must have their own bedroom and study facilities.

Many students are living away from home for the first time and learning to cope with study in Australia. Homestay families can assist students to become accustomed to life in Australia by:

- including the student as a family member;
- guiding the student in community safety considerations, including use of public transport;
- taking an active interest in the student's academic progress, social life and interests;
- encouraging the students to enjoy a well-balanced life;
- ensuring the students are maintaining an acceptable diet and routines of eating.

Some specific requirements of Homestay parents shall include:

- providing guidance to the student on effective study habits;
- monitoring the home based routines of the student and reporting any concerns to the Homestay Officer, particularly overuse of recreational technology;
- provision of three meals per day each day of the week and reasonable access for the student to healthy snacks such as fresh fruit between meals;
- assisting the students with transport where convenient to do so;
- training the student on safe and energy efficient use of all homestay amenities;
- ensuring the students comply with laundry routines of the home so as to ensure that the student always has access to laundered College uniform items;
- reporting ANY instances of late arrival home by the student to both the Local Support Person and the Homestay Officer as soon as possible;
- reporting any anomalous requests made by the students to the Local Support Person and Homestay Officer, such as:
 - a. plans to attend a social gathering beyond curfew hours;
 - b. plans to organise a social event/party at the Homestay or at a public venue;
 - c. plans to stay overnight at the home of somebody else;

- reporting ANY observed or suspected student behaviour of concern, particularly where the behavior may be damaging to the welfare of the student, to members of the Homestay family or to members of the College or wider community;
- exercising strict adherence to the requirements of the Billanook College Child Safe Policy in terms of the student's privacy, and emotional and physical safety in the home. To view this policy, please see link below:

<http://www.billanook.vic.edu.au/AboutUs/ChildSafety.aspx>

- ***Please Note: Homestay families must advise the Homestay Officer of any additional adults that may be residing in the home - regardless of brevity of stay.***
- maintaining an awareness of Billanook College events by reading the fortnightly College Bulletin sent by email;
- reporting Student Absence Due to Illness.

Absence Due to Illness

We require homestay families to assist the College to maintain accurate records of school attendance by reporting any known International Student absence from the College by use of the attendance line phone number listed at the front of this booklet.

Should the student need medical assistance, please inform the Homestay Officer to make necessary arrangements.

A medical certificate must support any absence of more than two consecutive days due to ill health. A student undertaking a Unit 1/2 or 3/4 (VCE) subject must have a medical certificate if they miss a SAC, test or scheduled assignment deadline. All absences will be monitored systematically by College administration staff in order to comply with our legal requirements.

Should the student become ill during the course of the school day, the College will contact the Homestay family to advise and discuss what action needs to be taken.

Students need to be aware that there is an out of pocket cost of between \$70 and \$90 per doctor's visit. Some rebate may be claimed afterward through their health insurance.

In cases of illness, students ARE NOT permitted to contact their Homestay family directly. In such instances, all decisions regarding the student's health management must flow through the College Wellness Centre.

Expectations of Students as a Member of a Homestay Family

The only accommodation option for International Students enrolled at Billanook College shall be placement of the student with a College approved Homestay Family. Students must understand that it is a privilege to be able to reside with a local family and as a result the College expects nothing but the very best effort of all International Students to adhere to the following expectations.

As a member of a Homestay Family, students agree to the following:

- display respect for the Homestay family members and their home at all times;
- display respect for any Homestay Rules considered necessary for the smooth functioning of the specific family Homestay routines;
- communicate openly and honestly at all times with Homestay parents and be willing to ask questions when unsure of any matters of concern;
- maintain a co-operative and friendly manner toward other Homestay members at all times;
- accept and follow all Billanook College imposed guidelines on return times to Homestay and to strictly use the Billanook College Weekend Driver Service
- students, regardless of age should not be returning to their Homestay Residence any later than 9:45pm on Friday and Saturday or 7.45pm Sunday evenings.
- under NO circumstances should students be using Taxis, Uber Transport or Private Transport supplied by friends of a similar age;
- restrict social outings to no more than two out of three possible weekend occasions. Students may engage in social activities on Fridays after school and on either Saturdays or Sundays **but not both**. On such occasions the student must ensure that they are accessing public transport in a convenient and timely manner or utilising the Weekend Driver Service provided by the College;
- accept that on Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings, it is unacceptable to engage in social outings;
- always having their mobile phone turned on and charged ready to receive calls from Homestay parents, Local Support Persons (Guardians), Homestay Officer and other Billanook Staff. It is also a responsibility of the student to ensure they always have sufficient mobile phone credit to be able to make calls;

- notify the Homestay parent, Local Support Person and Homestay Officer of any change in their mobile phone contact details;
- inform the Homestay parent IN ADVANCE if the student is not intending to be home for a meal;
- maintain an acceptable routine of personal hygiene – bathing / showering daily and to accept responsibility for cleaning bathroom and toilet amenities after personal use;
- accept and adhere to the OPEN DOOR POLICY in study spaces so that Homestay parents may have awareness of appropriate use of technology by the student;
- seek permission from a Homestay parent, in advance, before inviting a friend or visitor to enter the Homestay residence;
- inform the Homestay parent if the student has any health related concerns, including informing the Homestay parent of any medications they may have in their possession in the Homestay residence;
- accept responsibility for maintaining a tidy bedroom and follow directions from the Homestay parent on any routines associated with this matter;
- accept that they may be required to assist with some basic Homestay family chores;
- report to the Homestay parent, without delay, any damage they may have caused to the Homestay property or amenities;
- openly discuss with their Homestay parent, Local Support Person or Homestay Officer well in advance any plans for social gatherings such as parties regardless of the planned location of such activities. Students are reminded of Australian laws regarding purchase, possession and/ or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and other tobacco products and illegal and harmful drugs;
- communicate plans for return travel to their home country through their Local Support Person to the Homestay Officer and Homestay parent no later than six weeks prior to such travel. This includes providing copies of departure and arrival tickets to the Homestay Officer;

- complete Homestay payments to the Homestay parent in the agreed manner always ONE MONTH in advance. Should there be any reason that the Student cannot make the Homestay payment on time this matter must be communicated to both the Homestay parent and the Homestay Officer for their consideration;
- students are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have regarding their Homestay placement with their Homestay parent, their Local Support Person or the Homestay Officer for advice and assistance. This should be done as early as possible to prompt resolution of any difficulties.
- should students have any issues with their homestay family, they are to contact the Homestay Officer to discuss a resolution.

Commitment to Responsible Use of Public Transport

Students are expected to be well informed of their transport options to and from their homestay through efficient use of Public Transport.

Homestay parents have a right to know the location of the student at all times and also have a right to impose clear expectations upon the student regarding safe and convenient use of public transport.

Late returns to the Homestay residence outside the designated hours of the Weekend Driver Service will not be tolerated by the College.

The instruction and advice of the Homestay parent, the Local Support Person and the Homestay Officer is to be respected and followed by the student **at all times**. Should unexpected situations arise with public transport it is essential that the student advises their homestay parent as soon as possible.

Overnight Stays

No students of any age are permitted to stay out overnight without the express permission of the Homestay Officer and that of their bi-lingual support person. Permission will **ONLY** be granted once the Homestay Officer is satisfied that appropriate adult care and supervision shall be in place for the student. Breach of this condition may place the student visa status at risk. Contact details **MUST** be provided to the Homestay Officer.

Terms and Conditions

Billanook College as facilitator of the Homestay Program sets in place the base Terms and Conditions of the Homestay placement of each International Student. These Terms and Conditions may not be varied by the Homestay Parent, the Student nor the Parent/Local Support Person without the prior knowledge and approval of Billanook College.

Financial Arrangements

- Billanook College sets the Homestay Fee each year and advises the parents of the amount that needs to be provided to their student in advance so that the Student may self-manage Homestay payments in advance;
- the Homestay Fee as at 1 July 2017 is \$315 per week = \$1,365 per calendar month;
- Homestay Fees are payable by the student in ADVANCE on a monthly basis;
- it is preferable that Homestay Fee Payments are made by Electronic Funds Transfer directly by the student into the Homestay Family bank account. In the event that both parties agree on payment of Homestay Fees in cash, the Homestay family must provide the student with a written receipt as proof of payment;
- Billanook College will inform all parties at least two months in advance of any change to the Homestay Fee. As a general principle Homestay Fees are adjusted upwards on 1 July each year to offset increases in cost of living;

Homestay Fee Adjustment in Periods of Student Absence

If the International Student wishes to take a vacation in the MID-YEAR school holiday break, they are entitled to a 50% discount of Homestay Fees for that period of absence, provided NO LESS than two weeks' notice was provided to the College and to the Homestay family.

Most International Students return to their home country in the Australian Summer holiday break (December/January). If Students are planning to return to their current Homestay family and shall be leaving some of their possessions at the Homestay residence then a HOLDING FEE of 10% of the scheduled Homestay Fee is due and payable before departure in December.

In the case of student absence as a result of published school camps, the student is entitled to a 50% discount/refund of the Homestay Fee for the number of days of absence. Rather than being a physical reimbursement of that sum, it is acceptable that the student simply pays a lower Homestay Fee to reflect that discount in the next monthly Homestay payment.

Notice of Termination

Unless otherwise stated, homestay arrangements are in place for an on-going period of time. If either party wishes to terminate the Homestay Agreement, this can only occur with the knowledge and involvement of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer. In most circumstances, either party will require a minimum of two weeks' notice to terminate the Agreement. This period of notice may be waived, at the discretion of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer, by negotiation and as deemed necessary in unusual or extreme circumstances.

Damage to Homestay Residence

In the event that damage is caused by the student to the property of the Homestay family it is important that this matter be brought to the attention of the College Homestay Officer as promptly as possible, for further investigation. The College will require the Homestay parent to submit a Homestay Damages Claim Form:

- a. As a general principle, the student is liable to pay the cost of repair or replacement of property damaged by their act or omission. Exceptions to this rule may apply in the case of general wear and tear issues and other case by case circumstance;
- b. Billanook College agrees to mediate, in consultation with the students and or their parents, for the restoration of the property damage;
- c. Homestay Parents are well advised to check their Home and Contents Insurance Policy to ensure that significant losses sustained through the actions of a Boarder or Guest shall be recoverable under that policy.

Insurance of Student Property

- a. Homestay parents undertake to make every effort to maintain the security of student possessions within the Homestay residence;
- b. International Students should make a list of all personal property items stored in the Homestay residence, with a replacement value of more than \$500;
- c. Photos of such possessions, receipts as proof of purchase and records of serial numbers should be maintained by the student as proof of ownership;
- d. It is recommended that Homestay parents enquire with their insurer as to the process involved in declaring such possessions on the Household Contents Insurance policy. Should there be an increase in Insurance Premium Cost to do this, payment of this additional premium by the student and/or their parents should then be negotiated through the Homestay Officer.



Billanook College

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