



**St Mary's College**

21ST CENTURY WOMEN OF MERCY

Catholic School for Girls  
Year 7 to Year 13 (Ages 11–18)  
Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand

# Student Homestay Guidelines Booklet 2021



Welcome to St Mary's College. We hope you enjoy your time here with us. Your host (Homestay) family will help you settle into school life and introduce you to the "kiwi" way of life whilst learning all about your culture and customs.

You will probably find many differences between living in New Zealand and living in your country. It's important to keep an open mind and remember that it takes time to adapt. If you are confused about something, make sure you ask your host family or International Department for help. They will talk with you each term to make sure you are happy with your accommodation.

### **Communication**

Remember, you need to speak English as often as you can! Tell your host family if you are going out, and when you will be home so that they do not worry about you. They will tell you the latest time you can come home. Please give your host family a contact phone of friends you are out with or a number if you visit a friend.

### **Cultural Differences**

New Zealanders are quite casual and informal. We usually address people by their first name instead of using titles like 'Mr' and 'Mrs' (however, you must use these titles for your teachers). It is polite to look people in the eyes when you are talking to them, to say 'please' when you ask someone for something, and 'thank you' when somebody gives you something or does something for you. You should not wear your shoes inside unless your host family are happy with this. It is impolite to talk about money and age. Your host family may ask you to blow your nose with a tissue instead of sniffing. It is considered impolite to spit in public and you should cover your mouth when you yawn.

### **Mealtimes**

- Your host family will provide you with 3 meals per day.
- Breakfast in New Zealand is usually an informal meal, consisting of toast and/or cereal etc. Lunch is also usually informal and is usually cold (sandwiches, salad etc). You may have to prepare your own breakfast and lunch, but your host family will show you what to do.
- Dinner is the main meal of the day and is usually a hot meal eaten between 6.00pm – 7.00pm with the whole family. Some students find New Zealand food quite bland. Do not be afraid to ask your host family for extra seasoning or sauces.
- Check with your host parents what food is available for lunches or snacks. Talk with your host family about meal sizes – whether you have too much food or not enough food.
- Try food that may be new to you but if you do not like something, it is ok to say, "no thank-you".

### **Money**

It is not safe to carry large amounts of cash with you. If you need help to open a bank account, please ask your host family or the International Department can help you. You may have to pay for extra things, such as special activities or holidays, with your host family – they will give you a choice.

### **Heating**

Your host family should provide a heater for your bedroom, but please turn it off before you go to bed, and when you are not in the room. Many New Zealanders will wear extra clothes instead of turning on the heating.

### **Showering**

In New Zealand, we wash ourselves inside the shower or bath, not on the floor. Hot water is expensive in New Zealand, and if you take too long the person after you might have a cold shower! Your host family may ask you to limit your showers to no longer than 10 minutes per day. When you are finished leave the bathroom tidy, wipe down surfaces and remove your hair in the handbasin or shower. Leave bathroom clean. **No dying of hair at any time in the home.**

### **Sleeping**

Your host family will probably go to bed a lot earlier than you are used to (often 10.00pm or 11.00pm). If you are going to stay up later, please be quiet and try not to disturb your host family. Remember that we sleep between the sheets, and not on top of the blankets.

### **Jobs around the house**

As a member of the family your host family may ask you to help with chores such as washing the dishes after dinner. You need to keep your bedroom tidy. Your host family may do your laundry for you, or you may prefer to do it yourself. Ask your host parents where and how to dry your laundry.

### **Internet and Telephone**

Your host family will tell you the rules for using the Internet. Please do not download movies, TV shows or music without permission from your host family. You can also use the computers at school to check your emails. Any use of the telephone needs to be discussed with your homestay.

### **Transport**

Depending on where you live, you might walk, catch a bus, or get a ride to school. You will have to pay for your own transport costs. Your host family will show you how to catch the bus and explain how to buy a ticket.

### **Alcohol and Tobacco Laws**

It is illegal for a student under the age of 18 years old to purchase and use alcohol or cigarettes. However once 18 the school rules still **DO NOT** permit you to drink, smoke including e-cigarettes.

### **Emergencies and Important Services**

The New Zealand number for Police, Ambulance or Fire is **111**.

This is free and can be called at any time in cases of emergency.

For non-emergencies but needing assistance or to report lost/stolen phones, property call **105** – this is a free number.

For mental health support call **1737**, they offer a free service 24/7, with interpreter services available in over 40 languages.

**Covid-19 Tracing App** – ensure you install the Covid-19 tracer App on your phone so you can be contacted if required - <https://tracing.covid19.govt.nz/>

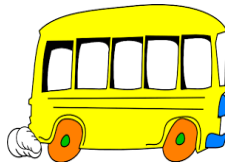
**School Contact – Sue King – International Director – 021 157 8776**

## IDEAS TO HELP YOU LIVING WITH A KIWI FAMILY

1. Write down the names of all the family members, phone numbers and address.



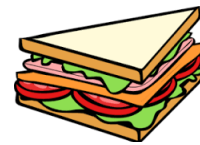
2. Make sure you know how to get to and from school by walking and bus. Write instructions down as you may forget. The first trips to and from school are scary so please make sure you are confident and set the alarm to give yourself enough time.



3. **Communication** is the most important thing to remember in a homestay. Make sure you can tell your homestay if you are hungry or cold or feeling homesick or confused. The International Department will help too. Discuss this information with your new family:

### 1. Food/Meals/Kitchen

- What food do you like to eat? What are your dislikes or allergies?
- Discuss any kitchen rules. What can you eat if you are hungry i.e. fruit or snacks – where and what. Can you make a sandwich?
- Do you know how to use the toaster, kettle or microwave? Ask what your lunches will consist of i.e. sandwiches or rolls, yoghurt, fruit, snacks and treats and if you need to make it yourself so you allow enough time in the mornings.
- Make sure you clean up afterwards.
- If you purchase any special food for yourself – ask where you can store this.



### 2. Expectations & House Rules

- What house rules apply in your family e.g. your bed to be made in the morning and curtains pulled back.
- The room is kept tidy
- No cell phones at the table
- No food in the bedrooms or other areas if applicable



### 3. Showers & Personal Hygiene

- When is the best time for you to shower? (5-10 minute showers are acceptable).
- Where can you keep your toiletries?
- Where are the towels and where should you put them after use?
- How do you dispose of sanitary pads/tampons?



#### 4. Laundry

- Discuss how you do the washing in the family and how your washing will get done i.e. put washing in a laundry basket and it will be collected and washed.
- You may feel uncomfortable and sensitive about other people seeing your washing, so you may be happy to do your own or ask for a separate washing bag for your underwear.
- Some students will want to wash everything including your entire uniform each night – this is not necessary.
- Remember not to hang your wet clothes in your room – use a clothesline or ailer.



#### 5. Internet

The school offers free Internet and wireless access. Some New Zealand families **do not** have unlimited internet please check with your Homestay family about internet access.



#### 6. Curfews

We understand that overseas students go to bed late. Realistic expectations need to be set that fit in with your family rules. Discuss lights out or when they want the computer or devices to be switched off.

##### Usual Curfew Times

These are guidelines and we leave it to Homestay Families judgement as to a suitable time for the student to be home depending on the circumstances. **Your family rules apply.**

AGE	SUNDAY-THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Under 14 Years	6.00pm (summer) 5.00pm (winter)	Under Supervision	Under Supervision
14 -15 Years	7.00pm (summer) Winter before dark	8.00 – 9.00pm	8.00 – 9.00pm
16 Years	8.00pm (summer) Winter before dark	10.00pm*	10.00pm*
17 Years	8.00pm (summer) Winter before dark	11.00pm*	11.00pm*
18 Years	8.00pm (summer) Winter before dark	12.00* midnight	12.00* midnight



\*Discuss with your homestay family they **MUST** be comfortable with transport arrangements whether it be a bus or Uber (outside of school hours). Students must help be responsible for their own safety. When going out, let homestay family know where and whom you are out with, give them a friend's mobile number. The school or homestay family may contact your parents to find out what is acceptable, but you do need to abide by their decisions. If there are any concerns or you need anything clarified contact the International Office.

#### 7. Heating

If you feel cold make sure you ask for more blankets. If you use a heater or an electric blanket, please make sure you turn it off after use.



#### 8. Chores

Once you settle in find out any jobs or responsibilities that you need to do i.e. setting the table, washing the dishes, emptying the dishwasher. Any help is always appreciated by your Host family



## **NEW ZEALAND LAW**

- You must wear a cycle helmet when you ride a bicycle
- You must wear a seatbelt in a car
- You are not permitted to travel in a car driven by a person with a Restricted License
- Unless holding a Variation of Conditions Student Visa, students may not be employed.
- You are not permitted to buy or use alcohol, tobacco or vaping products if you are under 18 years of age. **Please note while you are in the car of the School, you may not buy nor use alcohol, tobacco or vaping products REGARDLESS of your age.**

Remember, in New Zealand vehicles drive on the LEFT-hand side of the road! Be careful when crossing the road and use pedestrian crossings wherever possible.

## **ST MARY'S COLLEGE - ACCOMMODATION RULES (AS PER STUDENT CONTRACT)** (Schedule One – Part Three)

### **While living with a School approved Homestay, the Student agrees:**

1. International students, whilst enrolled at St Mary's College, are not permitted to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes including e-cigarettes, own or drive motorcars or motorcycles.
2. Additional requirements as per the school Code of Conduct (Schedule One and in Student Diary).
3. To comply with all laws of New Zealand.
4. Not to engage in any social or leisure activities that may place them or other persons, in undue danger or risk of harm. This includes the Student putting himself / herself in a position which may give rise to suspicions or allegations of such activities.
5. To obtain written permission from Parents and the School prior to obtaining any tattoo, piercing or other bodily embellishments.
6. To comply with all Homestay rules, expectations and curfews set by the School and Homestay parents, including any policies of the School which apply.
7. To not use or not do anything which may cause damage to the Accommodation, including applying hair dyes, or smoking cigarettes including e-cigarettes or engaging in any other activity that may cause damage to the Accommodation.
8. To keep the Homestay parents always informed of your whereabouts. Provide them with phone numbers, if applicable, of any other students/families whom you are out with.
9. There is to be no overnight sleepovers without permission from the International Department and no friends sleeping over without permission from both families.
10. The student agrees that if they are in a romantic or intimate relationship with another person, they will not have unsupervised or overnight meetings and, if the school or homestay considers the relationship could put the student at risk or potential harm, the school will intervene, as necessary, with the collaboration of the parents.
11. Not to travel during the day or overnight outside of the town or city (as defined by the School) where the student is living, without prior written permission of the School.
12. Respect the privacy, values, and property of the Homestay.
13. Respect the home and personal property of the family. There are to be no visitors to the house unless the host family has been advised first.
14. Help to keep your home safe and secure. Lock windows and doors, switch off heaters and electrical appliances when not in use.
15. Always ask before borrowing or using any household items. Inform your host parents if something is damaged or broken. You do not pay for accidental damage, but you should replace something if you have been careless.

## HOMESTAY TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. If a student moves out of a homestay before the end of the contract, the portion of the homestay fees not already used will be refunded. The homestay placement or admin fee cannot be refunded.
2. The homestay fee includes three daily meals, laundry facilities, a warm bedroom with study facilities and internet usage.
3. Homestay changes can only be made with the approval of the International Director. Two weeks' notice, in writing/email, is required. The host family, regardless if the student moves out prior to the two weeks' notice period, will continue to be paid for two weeks. Homestay placement fees of \$350.00 apply to each new homestay.
4. **Homestay Retainer Fee.** This is payable when the student leaves at the end of the year and wants to "Hold" their room until they return to NZ. They are to give two weeks' notice, then \$50 a week is charged up to a maximum of \$250.00. Student's belongings can be stored out of the room in another part of the house, if the homestay wants to use the room, or belongings can be stored in the school garage for no charge. If the student moves out completely there is no retainer fee paid (but two weeks' notice still needs to be given).
5. Homestay families are paid during term break holidays. If the student leaves during term time or during the term holidays for longer than two weeks, the homestay family are paid two week's payment then \$50 after that (to a maximum of \$250.00 or five weeks).