

## Portland English Language Academy — Host Family Guidelines

### What Homestay Families Provide

1. **Airport pick up.** Please plan to pick up your student at the airport. You will be paid \$25 for this. If you are unable to pick up the student, you should try to arrange for a friend or relative to pick them up, or contact the PELA Housing Coordinator to see if alternate airport pick up can be arranged.
2. **A private bedroom.** This must include a desk with good lighting (such as a desk lamp or stand up lamp next to the desk), dresser, closet, and night table or stand with good lighting for reading. This bedroom must **only** be used for housing a student, cannot be used for storage of any kind, and must have a window which adheres to local regulations regarding fire code egress.
3. **Clean linens and towels.**
4. **Access to and use of all common areas** of the home (kitchen, living room, family room, computer room etc.). Please see "Students Cooking in the Kitchen" for more information.
5. **Clean and functioning Bathroom facilities.** While it is reasonable to ask students not to take showers longer than 15 minutes, we ask that you don't set severe time limits on water use.
6. **A living environment that is safe and secure.**
7. **Reasonably prompt repair of any part of the house that may affect its livability** (this would include malfunctioning major appliances).
8. **Breakfast & Dinner each day.**
9. **Invitations for the student to participate in many family activities.**
10. **As many opportunities for English conversation as is reasonably possible.**

### Activities with Students

During the first month of homestay, it is recommended that you do a **sightseeing/out-of-the-house activity** each week with the student. After the first month, students often make friends and begin to go out and explore Portland on their own, but it is still good to do a sightseeing/out-of-the-house activity 2-3 times a month.

Please note that even though students may want to spend a lot of time with their host family, host families should be free to have 'family time'. Please don't feel like you have to include your homestay student in every family event, but keep in mind that a major reason students do homestays is to be involved in the daily life of an American family.

### About Meals

1. **Breakfast:** In most cases, students prepare their own breakfasts. Please make sure that you show them around your kitchen so that they are comfortable getting their breakfasts in the morning. Students may (within reason) request preferred food for breakfast, which the family will be responsible for purchasing.
2. **Dinner:** Students expect to have dinner **with their host families at least five nights a week**. Note that even if you do not have dinner with your students, you are still expected to provide AND prepare dinners for them. Should you go to a restaurant with the student, you are expected to pay for their meal (up to a reasonable amount, such as ~\$20).
3. **Lunch:** You are not required to provide lunches for your student, but are welcome to do so (at no additional cost to student). If the student wishes to make their own lunch to bring to school, you can take them to the grocery store so that they can buy the lunch foods they wish to eat and keep it in your refrigerator.

**Students cooking in the kitchen:** Many host families are uncomfortable with students cooking in the kitchen. This is often because students lack understanding how American appliances work. This can also be because students may make messes requiring a lot of cleaning. If students want to cook, **it is recommended that you supervise them while they cook instead of denying them the opportunity**. As adults, PELA students may not understand why they are not able to cook on their own, so any way you can facilitate their desires while also ensuring the cleanliness and safety of your home.

### Host Family Vacations

Do not leave your student alone at your house for more than 3 days at a time, and no more than one night at a time during the student's first month of homestay. **If you are gone for more than 3 days**, please make arrange for someone (relatives, friends, neighbors) to involve the student in activities and meals (primarily dinners) while you are gone.

### Long-Distance Phone Calls

The use of the host family's home telephone for long distance phone calls is an arrangement between you and the student. PELA is not responsible for any unpaid phone charges made by the student. Most students come to Portland with laptops & cellphones, so this is usually not an issue.

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### Temperature in the Home

Some students come from tropical/sub-tropical countries, so those students are not used to cold weather. Talk to students about what temperature you normally keep you home, and options for them to stay warm (i.e., buy a sweater, don't wear shorts). During the winter, have (safe!) space heaters available for students to use in their rooms at night.

### How to be a Successful Host Family

Remember, this is probably your student's first time to America. Their customs and habits may differ from yours. Their level of English may also affect your ability to communicate seemingly simple ideas. Please make sure that you discuss your own house rules as soon as the student has rested and recovered from their long journey. Shortly after school begins, they should be coming to you with a questionnaire that will help!

Also, each student is their own individual. Some students will be more social than others. Some will be more comfortable in a homestay situation than others. Some will be able to adjust better and more quickly than others. Please be patient with your host student as they adjust. Please make every effort to include them in your family activities, but be respectful of their need to recuperate as well.

Many host families give students a printed handout listing the student's responsibilities for cleaning their room and bathroom, as well as any 'house rules' (ex: quiet time after 10:00 PM).

### The Student Placement Process

About 1-2 months before a student's arrival, the Housing Coordinator contacts potential host families about hosting a specific student. If the host family agrees to host the student, the Housing Coordinator then waits until the student sends their flight information to PELA. The Housing Coordinator then sends the host family a **Host Confirmation Email**. With the Host Confirmation Email you will find the following:

- **Homestay Agreement.** Print 3 copies and sign them with the student. One is for the host family, one is for the student, and one is to be sent back to Homestay Coordinator.
- **Flight Information** and **Orientation Schedule.**
- **Host Family Guidelines** sheet.

- **Copy of your Host Family Profile.** This is the form which will be sent to students prior to their arrival. If there are any changes that need to be made to this information, contact the Housing Coordinator.

Housing placements are not official until a host family has signed and returned the **Host Confirmation Email**. By signing this email, you are agreeing (effective the date you pick up the student) to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Homestay Agreement and these Guidelines.

### Receiving Homestay Fees

**About fifteen days after the student moves in with you,** you will receive the first month's homestay check from PELA. The amount can be either:

**\$675.00** — \$650 for one month + \$25.00 airport pick up fee

*or*

**\$325** — \$300.00 deposit + \$25.00 airport pick up fee (the student will then be responsible for paying you the remaining \$350 at the end of the 15-day trial period)

*If you only received \$325 from PELA, you will need to collect any subsequent month's homestay fees directly from the student at the end of the student's second week of homestay. If you received \$675 from PELA, you will continue to receive a \$650 check each month from PELA until all pre-paid homestay monies have been exhausted, at which time you will need to collect the \$650 monthly homestay fee directly from the student at the beginning of their homestay month.*

Please note that from time to time, it may take longer than 15 days to send the first homestay check out to host families. This is due to the fact that some overseas agents which help students come to PELA do not immediately send the money they received from the student—thus, it sometimes takes extra time to contact the agent to have them send us the student's homestay money.

If you are uncertain whether you need to collect money or how much to collect from a student, please contact the Housing Coordinator.