

QUALITY AREA O

HOMESTAY SERVICE PROVIDERS

HOMESTAY DEFINITION:

Homestay is defined as supported and supervised in-home accommodation offered for the purpose of housing domestic and international students. The homestay environment supports an immersive cultural and language experience within a safe and supportive environment.

NOTES:

- *Where students are under 18 and studying at a NEAS endorsed Centre, these standards are to be read in conjunction with NEAS Quality Area F: Welfare of Students Aged Under 18 Years.*
- *In order to receive and maintain NEAS Quality Endorsement, homestay service providers may be required to confirm, at request, their compliance with any relevant laws and regulations.*

QUALITY PRINCIPLE O1:

The homestay service provider demonstrates effective governance and management to support students and host families.

- O1.1 The homestay service provider has an overarching statement of its service objectives and values.
- O1.2 The homestay service provider has an organisational structure and policies and procedures which support the objectives and values of the service.
- Note: Examples of policies and procedures include host vetting and placement procedures, host payment procedures, disputes and conflict resolution, sexual harassment and abuse prevention and reporting, critical incidents, management and supervision of under 18s, students with special needs, diversity and inclusion.*
- O1.3 Documentation provided to students by the homestay service provider includes information in plain English on the accommodation standards and accommodation inclusions, homestay house-rules, terms and conditions of service agreements, fees and charges, payments, refund policies, a complaints procedure and termination or transfer procedure.
- O1.4 The homestay service provider gives information and training on cultural awareness to both hosts and students.
- O1.5 The homestay service provider uses a communication tool or platform which enables effective booking, tracking and monitoring of placements, and feedback.
- O1.6 All homestay service provider employees, including managers and administration staff, as well as volunteers and any other personnel who come into direct contact with students, are subject to child safety screening procedures relevant to the jurisdiction, irrespective of the age of the students they deal with.
- O1.7 Student welfare provision is compulsory for under 18s, and is the responsibility of the education provider. The homestay service provider includes the education provider's arrangements for welfare provision in its terms and conditions for students and hosts.
- O1.8 The homestay service provider supplies both students and hosts with 24-hour crisis and emergency numbers. These numbers include 000, Lifeline, Beyond Blue, and Kids Help Line. The homestay service provider also supplies students and hosts with all relevant contact information, emergency numbers, and messaging apps for the homestay service provider.

- O1.9 The homestay service provider gives students and hosts a briefing on which services to call in a variety of emergencies.
- O1.10 The homestay service provider is responsible for receiving homestay fees from the student and remitting host payments to hosts within a reasonable period. Hosts must agree not to collect any fees or payments directly from students or any parties other than the homestay service provider in relation to a homestay placement.
- O1.11 Placements are regularly monitored by the homestay service provider and feedback regarding the homestay experience is encouraged from students and hosts at least every three months. Feedback may be provided through phone, email, or online review options.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE O2:

The homestay premises provides students with a safe, secure and comfortable environment.

- O2.1 Each student has access to an appropriately private room that can be comfortably used for sleeping and studying. The room has a bed, pillow, linen, desk, chair, storage space, lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation, all of which are adequate for all occupants. The property must be in a good state of repair and be reasonably clean.
- O2.2 As per the service agreement, a student may share a room with another student, each of whom must have their own bed, pillow, linen, desk, chair, and storage space. Sharing is limited to two students per room, unless other arrangements (e.g., study tours) are agreed to in accordance with the service agreement.
- O2.3 Homestay service providers are required to state specific requirements and limitations regarding sharing in their policies, procedures and in the information made available to stakeholders (e.g., families, agents, education providers). These should refer to age, gender, and numerical limits, for example.
- O2.4 Students have access to shared areas of the premises, including access to a lockable bathroom and toilet, kitchen, laundry, and living areas, as well as household essentials, such as soap, toilet paper and towels.
- O2.5 Each student has a key or entry code to access the premises.
- O2.6 The premises has a working smoke alarm and complies with relevant health and safety legislation.
- O2.7 Meals are provided in accordance with the service agreement.
- O2.8 Students in a single placement have appropriately private access to the room during the contracted period. On a schedule agreed to by the student and the host, the host may check the room for cleanliness and safety.

Note: Under 18 students must live within the premises with the host and not in a separate accommodation space, such as a granny flat.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE O3:

The homestay service provider supports effective welfare arrangements for all students.

- O3.1 Prior to arrival, the homestay service provider supplies students (or the relevant contact for the placement) with a plain English induction to the homestay service, which includes the obligations, rights, and responsibilities of the student, host family, and service provider. This should also include general safety information and cultural orientation.

O3.2 Prior to arrival, the homestay service provider supplies students with a plain English placement report which includes details about the homestay and information on all residents in the accommodation.

Note: Details should include pets, age of children, accessibility features (e.g., stairs), pool safety, etc.

O3.3 The homestay provider works with hosts to provide students with a comprehensive orientation of the accommodation and local area upon arrival, including public transport, shopping areas, recreation areas and any local hazards.

O3.4 Where stipulated in the service agreement, the homestay service provider supplies students with the agreed cultural exchange, social interaction, language development assistance and specialised support (e.g., homework supervision).

O3.5 Where stipulated in the service agreement, students may be subject to restrictions on times when they are permitted to stay out.

O3.6 Students are required to notify hosts and the homestay service provider of their intention to change the terms of their agreement, including termination, within the notice period specified in their service agreement. For under 18s, this may require written permission from the student's education provider.

O3.7 Students are required to notify hosts and the homestay service provider of their intention to take holidays away from their homestay within the notice period specified in their service agreement. For under 18s, this may require written permission from the student's education provider.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE O4:

Host families are provided with information and training to support the welfare and wellbeing of students.

O4.1 The homestay service provider requires hosts and all adult residents to obtain and maintain the appropriate safety checks, particularly child safety checks for students under 18 on any visa.

O4.2 The homestay service provider inspects the homestay accommodation at least every six months or whenever suitable, in accordance with host history and feedback, the homestay service provider's terms and conditions, the educational provider's requirements, and the appropriate regulatory and legislative requirements, for example, the National Code and ESOS Act.

Note: Homestay inspections by the homestay service provider may include virtual tours and should be scheduled in accordance with quality review processes.

O4.3 The homestay service provider supplies hosts with initial and regular training to ensure hosts understand regulatory requirements (including mandatory reporting), their roles and responsibilities, and familiarity with welfare and wellbeing issues.

O4.4 Terms and conditions stipulated by the homestay service provider, particularly where students are under 18, should include limitations on how long students can be left unattended in the home, restrictions on the use of the home by residents, and restrictions on overnight visitors for the host and the student.

O4.5 Prior to the student's arrival, the homestay service provider ensures hosts are provided with a placement report which includes key information about the student (e.g., age, cultural background, dietary requirements, health and medical needs, special instructions from the Australian education provider, etc.).

- O4.6 Hosts are required to notify students and the homestay service provider of their intention to change the terms of their agreement, including termination, within the notice period specified in their service agreement.
- O4.7 Appropriate insurance covering both the student and host is recommended. The homestay service provider stipulates in its agreement with the education provider, education agent, host family, and student, the details of the appropriate liability insurance (property and person) and which party is responsible for the insurance covering the host from the liability of the student and student from liability of the host during hosting.