

Homestay Planner

The homestay procedures and guidelines will assist in the management of homestays (girls visiting from out of town staying in homes in the community) organized by Girl Guides of Canada. To support the process, sample forms are available on our website (www.girlguides.ca).

Families wishing to offer homestay must submit an application and go through a screening process. This screening must include at least two reference checks and the non-member PRC process when there is no GGC adult Member in the family. Depending on your knowledge of the family and the information received via the reference checks, you may also wish to include a formal interview as part of your screening process.

Homestays should primarily be set up in homes where there is a screened adult Member

It is recommended that groups organizing a homestay program review the Adult Member Support Procedures, Module 2: Screening. While this module is primarily geared toward the screening of potential Members, it will provide you with sample questions to consider asking and things to keep in mind. If you have additional questions, please consult with your Commissioner or adviser, or e-mail safeguide@girlguides.ca.

Homestay guests under the provincial/territorial age of majority must be in the care of an adult at all times. Homestay guests may only be left alone with an adult who has a valid PRC.

In homes where there is no girl Member, there must be at least two homestay guests per home. In homes where there is a girl Member, or homestay guests are of the provincial/territorial age of majority, having one homestay guest is acceptable.

Homestay Guidelines

The following recommended guidelines will help in the organization of homestays.

Screening and Orienting Host Families

Host families are screened by the Members in the community organizing the homestay. To facilitate the homestay and ensure good communication and exchange of information, consider the following guidelines for the orientation of host families:

- Visit the host families and have a meeting to discuss their responsibilities for supervision and safety of the guest(s) according to the homestay procedures and other procedures as outlined in Safe Guide.
- Review the screening process with them, including the following:
 - Advise the host family of the screening process and the need for a PRC
 - Request two references
- Provide the family with a copy of the Code of Conduct for Members so that they understand the standards expected of our Members.
- Explain that you need to provide information about the host family to the parents of girl(s) who will be staying with them:
 - Ask the family to provide a list of people living in the home including their ages, genders and any communication challenges (e.g., if someone does not speak English).
 - Find out about sleeping arrangements. Explain that girls will need private sleeping quarters. They can share space with other females, but will need to have their own bed.

- As you have more details about the guests, facilitate the exchange of contact information between guests' parents/guardians and the host family so that they can participate in an exchange of information (allergies, food preferences, sleeping arrangements, etc.).
- If you are arranging Guiding activities for the guests, ensure that the host families understand their obligations for transporting their guests to the event.
- Provide the host families with information about what to do in the event of sickness or injury. (This should be part of your ERP for the homestay.)
- Explain that:
 - If the host family wishes to provide entertainment or other activities during free-time, the guests are the responsibility of the host. GGC does not provide insurance coverage. If they have concerns regarding insurance, they may wish to review their own insurance with their broker.
 - If a host family wishes to get together with other host families and guests for an organized activity, it would be prudent to notify the homestay coordinator/group organizer and to seek assistance to plan this activity as a sanctioned Guiding activity, as per Safe Guide procedures.

Orienting Guests and their Parents/Guardians

The following are guidelines to assist in preparing the guests and their parents/guardians for the homestay:

- Provide the guest's leader with the following information which is to be passed on to the guests' parents/guardians:
 - A list of people living in the home including their ages and genders
 - Details of sleeping arrangements
 - Details of supervision while their daughter/ward is in the home
 - Contact information for host families
 - A request to participate in the exchange of information (allergies, food preferences, etc.) with the host families to assist with the well-being of guest
- Upon arrival of the guests, introduce them to their host family. Ensure they have the host family's contact information and names of the members of the household.
- Arrange for guests to have with them their Personal Health form (H.1), in case of emergency.
- Provide guests with an emergency contact that is to be used in case they have any concerns for their safety.
- Explain that, if a guest participates in entertainment or other activities provided by the host family during free-time, they should be aware that GGC does not provide insurance coverage.
- Parents/guardians of homestay guest are informed that their daughter/ward will be sent home at their expense for any serious misconduct that is counter to the Code of Conduct for Members; this includes but is not limited to:
 - Use of illegal drugs or narcotics considered illegal in Canada, including marijuana
 - Consumption of alcohol
 - Sexual activity (mouth-to-mouth kissing, touching, intercourse) with anyone regardless of gender, age or consent

Group Organizing Homestay Checklist

The following is a check list for organizing homestay:

- Orient host families by providing them with information about their obligations, as above.
- Screen host families as described in the screening process. Check two references with a phone or e-mail interview. (Ask questions such as: How long have you known the family? Do you think they will be a good host family? Have you ever seen any evidence of physical or verbal abuse? Would you feel comfortable leaving your child with the family?)
- If there is a cost involved in obtaining PRCs, determine how this will be handled.
- Facilitate the sharing of information between the host families and the guests and their parents/guardians as noted above.
- Ensure that there is a good understanding of the financial obligations of the host family or the guests for things like food, transportation or entertainment.
- Provide information about sanctioned Guiding activities that are planned by the organizing group to leaders of homestay guests in order for parent/guardian permission to be obtained, when applicable.
 - Suggest to hosting families that they may wish to share information with the guest's parents/guardians about free-time activities they are planning to offer to their guests. This will enable the parents/guardians or guests to provide any pertinent information.
 - Arrange for, and provide, an emergency contact number for homestay guests.
 - In the event of any indications or concerns about abuse, immediately remove girls from the host home.