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Ottawa Edition

HOST GUIDE

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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing to be part of Go Canada's homestay program! The opportunity to host an international student is a wonderful, eye-opening experience and we would like to thank you in advance for choosing to embark on this rewarding journey to host a student from Spain.

This booklet has been prepared for the use of homestay families in order to make the most positive experience, answer questions, and act as a valuable reference throughout the hosting experience. As we work exclusively with students from Spain, here, you will also find specific insights into the Spanish culture, which will help you better understand the student and aid them during the time of adjustment.

We invite both new and returning hosts to read this booklet thoroughly as it has been assembled to prepare you in the best possible manner for the exciting hosting experience that is to come! For returning hosts, please make sure to read through this version of the guide carefully, as some information has changed from previous years.

2. LIST OF CONTACTS

Name	Position	Role/Correspondence Type	Contact Information E-mail
Stephane Lavoie	Go Canada Custodian and Homestay Coordinator	⇒ General Communication ⇒ Initial Homestay Placements ⇒ Progress Reports ⇒ Homestay Interviews ⇒ Home visits ⇒ Emergency contact	studentabroadcanada@outlook.com (613) 229 6237
Anna Choutova Ramón Palacios	Go Canada Homestay Coordinators	⇒ General Communication ⇒ Initial Homestay Placements ⇒ Progress Reports	homestay@gocanada.es +34 608 566 584 +34 609 971 131
Ingrid Martín-Caro/ Estefanía García / Rashid Sbai / Alexandra Popoff	Go Canada Program Coordinators	⇒ Conflict Resolution ⇒ Progress Reports	coordinador@gocanada.es
Anne-Marie Bereza	OCDSB Coordinator (full year students)	⇒ General inquiries (full year)	annemarie.bereza@ocdsb.ca (613) 239 0438
Vicente Conte	OCDSB Student Activities Coordinator	⇒ Activities-related matters	vicente.conte@ocdsb.ca (613) 239 0277
Greg Duggan	Director of Studies	⇒ Academic-related matters	greg.duggan@ocdsb.ca (613) 239 0314

In addition to the afore listed contacts, the student will receive a Student's Handbook from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) during the orientation session upon arrival, which will contain additional contact information such as a specific contact person at each school.

3. HOMESTAY PLACEMENTS

3.1 ELIGIBILITY TO HOST

Note: A summary of steps to hosting and the required documents are available on www.gocanada.es/homestay-application-and-resources. You may fill out and submit the required forms via the provided links. Any supporting documents, such as police record checks, may be submitted via the following email address: homestay@gocanada.es.

To be eligible to host a student, you must:

1. Fill out the Homestay Information form.
    - Online version of the form can be filled out and submitted here.
2. Provide required photos:
    - A family photo with all household members together
    - An exterior photo of your house (front view)
    - A photo of a common living area, such as the kitchen or the living room
    - A photo of the student's designated bedroom
    - A photo of the bathroom the student will be using
3. Provide bank account information for direct deposit.
    - Online version of the form can be filled out and submitted here;
    - Alternatively, you may provide a void cheque via email (homestay@gocanada.es) or in person.
4. Provide Police Record Checks for all persons living at the household over the age of 19 years.
5. Complete a home visit with one of our Homestay Coordinators.
    - Following review of your application, you will be contacted by our Homestay Coordinator who will schedule an interview at your home. Please note that the Homestay Coordinator will ask to have a tour of the house during the visit.
6. Provide Information Update form regarding any changes in the homestay (to be completed before the start of a new homestay placement period -usually in November of each year-).
    - Online version of the form can be filled out and submitted here.

3.2 WHO ARE THE STUDENTS?

Go Canada works exclusively in Spain, so all our students that come to study in Ottawa are Spanish. Students are typically between the ages of 14 and 19 years and come for either a short-term program (1 – 5 months) or the full academic year (10 months). During their time in Ottawa, they study at one of the Ottawa Carleton District School Board's high schools. Less frequently, they can also attend the Catholic or

the French school boards, or else a private or independent school. Students typically arrive during the last week of August to have enough time to settle in and get adjusted before the start of the school year. We provide the exact arrival and departure information a couple of months before the student's arrival.

3.3 HOW DO HOMESTAY PLACEMENTS WORK?

Once you have submitted all the paperwork and completed a home visit with a Homestay Coordinator, you will be entered into our homestay database and will be eligible to host a student. Program coordinators begin to make homestay placements upon receipt of student registration, which typically happens between November and April. While not typical, some placements may be made before or after these dates. Placements are usually based on availability, school preferences, and personal information provided by the student. Some students may specifically request families with children; others may request a particular area; while still others may have dietary restrictions that will determine their placement. As much as possible, we try to accommodate all the requests of the student as well as the homestay family.

Please note that submitting the Homestay Information form along with all the required documents does not guarantee that a student will be placed in your home. The demand for homestay accommodation varies from year to year and largely depends on the following factors:

- Fluctuations in short- vs. long-term student registrations.
    - Demand for short and long-term registrations varies from year to year. Therefore, if you have a particular preference for one term length over the other, it may be more difficult for us to find you a suitable match.
- Student gender preferences.
    - For example, if you prefer a male student, while the majority of our students for one year happen to be females, it will be hard for us to match you with a student.
- Available spots at schools.
    - Some high schools reach international student capacity faster than others. If no spots are available at the schools near your home, we might not be able to offer you a student that year.
- Specific requests such as homestays with small kids, teenagers, other international students, or couples without kids.

Sometimes we will provide you with a prospective student profile, but even if you confirm that you would like to host him/her, the match will not be completed until Go Canada confirms so in writing and specifically mentions that first contact may be made with the student. We will typically ask you to sign a Commitment to Host form (you may do it by clicking here) as a final step to completing the match.

Before the student's arrival, we will also ask you, the student, and the student's parents/legal guardians to

sign the Homestay and Student Expectations Agreement (you may do it by clicking here, filling out the required information and signing where applicable, as described on the document).

4. HOMESTAY FEES

The homestay fee will be paid directly to you by the student's parents/legal guardians or by Go Canada. It is up to the student's parents/legal guardians to choose if they would like to pay directly or if they would like for Go Canada to manage the payment of fees. In any circumstance, the monthly stipend will be transferred to your bank account via direct deposit. The stipend is to cover room and board, airport transfers, and all the particulars listed in the Expectations of Homestay Families checklist (Section 5.2).

We seek out homestay families that host students for the cultural experience and not financial gains. Therefore, the monthly stipend the student pays should only be considered as a means to bear the expense associated with providing this cultural experience. Students can easily tell which families are participating for financial gains and which are doing so sincerely for the cultural exchange, and the placement will simply not work if the student feels that the family's main objective for hosting is money.

The first month's homestay fee will be paid several days prior to the student's arrival. The second month and thereafter will be paid on the anniversary date of the student's arrival to your home, or several days in advance. For example, if the student arrives on August 28th, your anniversary date will be the 28th of each month.

If there are several unaccounted days at the end of the hosting period, the fees will be prorated. Should there be a homestay switch as per Section. 8.6.2, the prorated amount already received corresponding with the nights that the student has not effectively stayed with the homestay family must be refunded via e-transfer to a Canadian bank account to be provided by Go Canada, unless an agreement has been reached with the student's family to retain all or part of the exceeding fee received, due to the occurrence of special circumstances (the student's family will need to confirm this).

5. COMMON EXPECTATIONS

A homestay family is an integral part of the life of an international student. The homestay family provides more than just room and board, but a home away from home. Caring supervision and parenting on the part of the homestay family are essential for the international student's growth and development.

Likewise, a large part of the equilibrium in the homestay environment depends on the student's collaboration, communication and open-mindedness.

In order to ensure a positive experience for both parties, students and homestay families must have

common expectations regarding everyday living arrangements. The following expectations have been laid out for both students and homestays to create a positive experience. These expectations are further outlined in the Homestay and Student Expectations Agreement (link here). This Agreement must be signed by the student, the host, and the student's parents/legal guardians prior to the hosting period.

5.1 EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

- Abide by the normal rules set out by the family and contribute to routine operations of the household.
- Respect the property of the homestay family and treat it with care. Understand that such property belongs to the homestay family and should not be taken outside the house (if applicable) without consent, even if just for a while.
- Make an effort to get involved in the family life and participate in family activities.
- Respect rules regarding curfews and mealtimes.
- Limit the use of electronic devices while living with the host to ensure an optimal integration in the host family's life and to avoid insufficient sleep and inadequate performance at school.
- Inform the homestay family if planning to be absent for a meal or arriving home late in the evening.
- Inform the host immediately upon any damage caused by the student on the host's property, regardless of whether it was intentional or accidental.
- Get approval from both the homestay family and the student's own parents/legal guardians to stay out overnight.
- Invite guest(s) to the home only with prior knowledge and permission of the homestay family.
- Respect homestay parents' concerns: your homestay family may refuse to give you permission to participate in some activities. Reasons for their refusal might include: concern for safety and/or conflict with family plans.
- Clean up after yourself in the home and participate in household chores.
- Act in accordance with the laws of the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario. It is prohibited for students to use alcohol and illegal drugs. The legal drinking age in Ontario is 19 years. Students caught using drugs or alcohol will be dismissed from the program and must return home immediately. It is also strictly prohibited and severely punished to steal items from stores, private homes or any other location.
- Always let your homestay family know where you are and respond to their text messages/emails/phone calls in a prompt manner.
- Do not carry large amounts of money or leave large amounts of money in your room.

5.2 EXPECTATIONS OF HOST FAMILIES

- Prior to the student's arrival, advise the homeowner insurance company that you will be taking in the student for the hosting period.
- Communicate with the student prior to arrival via e-mail, Skype or any other means as may be deemed appropriate.
- Keep the student's parents updated about the student's status and well-being during the hosting period, should the student's parents request such information.
- Provide pick-up and drop-off airport transportation both at the beginning and the end of the hosting period, and if the student decides to head home for Christmas holidays and/or March Break. For the avoidance of doubt, all airport transportation is included in the homestay fees agreed.
- Inform the student about household rules, including curfew, mealtimes, household chores, etc., either prior to or upon the student's arrival.
- Provide the student with a private bedroom, which includes bed, bedding, empty closet with hangers, window, mirror and desk with a chair. The bedroom should be well lit and properly heated.
- Provide three wholesome meals a day and snacks as required (see Section 8.1 for more information).
- Provide the student with towels, laundry detergent and toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and shower gel. Please note that your student may wish to bring or purchase their own toiletries that fit their particular needs. This should be agreed upon before the student's arrival. If masks are still mandatory, it will be the student's responsibility to bear the cost; however, the host family should help purchase masks, if needed.
- Provide the student with a key to the house.
- Include the student in normal family activities.
- Act in the best interest of the student's health and assist with any required medical appointments, should the student become ill.
- Speak solely in English with the student.
- Speak solely in English in the presence of the student.
- Respect the religious and cultural values of the student and not force them to attend any religious or cultural event that they do not wish to participate in.
- Collect monthly stipend from the student's parents/legal guardians or from Go Canada, whichever applies (see Section 4). If the stipend is managed by Go Canada, confirm receipt in writing by emailing homestay@gocanada.es. If the stipend is transferred by the student's parents/legal guardians, confirm receipt in writing to the student's parents/legal guardians and copy Go Canada in the email (please cc: homestay@gocanada.es).
- Not leave the student unsupervised overnight. If you expect to be away overnight, please try to find a responsible adult to stay with the student and notify Go Canada of this as soon as possible, and in any event with more than 48 hours in advance. If you cannot find anyone to stay with the student

and require respite care, please notify Go Canada as soon as possible, and in any event with more than 48 hours in advance. Should the host require respite care, the host shall pay Go Canada an amount corresponding with the nights not hosting the student (at a rate of $CAD 34), so that Go Canada may pay such amount to the host family offering the respite care.

- Not expect or ask the student to babysit the host's children (if applicable) or any other child known to the host unless mutually agreed, including compensation.
- Avoid the use of drugs, excessive alcohol or any other substance (including marijuana) that may affect the behaviour of the family member in question in front of the student. Never offer the student any such substance.
- Inform Go Canada of any changes in the homestay composition, such as a family member moving away, a family member coming back home, obtaining a new pet, etc. Please use this form for updates.
- Inform Go Canada if you will be hosting any other international students, or if an international student you have moves out. Please use this form for updates. Please note that as a policy, we cannot allow homestays to host other international students whose first language is Spanish during the time you commit to hosting a student from our Agency, unless overtly agreed by the student's parents/legal guardians. Likewise, please also note that generally, we do not allow students of opposite sex to be placed at the same homestay, unless overtly agreed by both our student's parents/legal guardians and the other international student's parents/legal guardians.
- Should the student request to attend a party, contact the hosting family prior to agreeing and ensure that the party will be supervised by a responsible adult.
- Inform Go Canada if the student does not behave as expected or if there are any persistent problems. Problems should be dealt with as quickly as possible to maintain harmony within the household. We are always here to help and mediate.
- Send Go Canada reports every three months regarding the student's stay, as well as an early report two weeks after the student's arrival, as outlined in Section 8.9.
- Meet with the Student's Custodian at least once per semester at the home of the Host. The meeting will be arranged in due time between the Host and the Custodian to suit both parties' availability. The objective of the meeting is to facilitate communication and ensure the placement continues to meet the requirements and expectations.
- Fill out and submit the online Trip Authorization form every time the student is planning a travel or activity outside of Ottawa without the host or the student's school's staff, as well as an overnight travel or overnight activity with the host.
- Most importantly, treat the student as part of the family, provide guidance and support, include the student in typical family activities and share mealtimes together.

6. PREPARING FOR YOUR STUDENT'S ARRIVAL

The following is a checklist to be completed prior to the student's arrival:

- Submit Police Record Checks, banking information, and Homestay and Student Expectations Agreement and, if required, Commitment to Host form (templates of these documents can be found here).
- Write the student an introduction email and keep in constant communication with the student. This will allow both parties to get to know each other and make the transition as smooth as possible. This is also a good opportunity for homestay families to meet the student's parents and discuss things such as curfews and mutual expectations regarding the experience. Students will have already written a letter addressed to the homestay families, which will have been submitted by Go Canada in the students' profiles upon homestay placement. **Therefore, it makes sense for the homestay families to send an email to students first once the placement is confirmed on both ends and Go Canada informs the homestay families that they may contact their respective student.**
- Ensure you have an extra house key to give to the student for the duration of their stay.
- Familiarize yourself with this Guide for Homestay Families.
- Contact Go Canada about any changes in the homestay composition, such as hosting another student, obtaining a pet, or having a family member move in or out. If you do have changes to report, you may do so here.
- Prepare the student's bedroom and bathroom for arrival, including bedding, towels, and toiletries.

7. ARRIVAL AND FIRST TWO WEEKS

7.1 AIRPORT ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

The arrival date will typically be during the last two weeks of August. Unless otherwise specified, students will be flying into Ottawa accompanied by a Go Canada chaperone. The host family is expected to pick up the student at the airport at the specified time. Flight details will be provided at least a month prior to the student's arrival.

At least one person from the homestay family should be waiting for the student in the Arrivals area, which is located on the grounds floor, near the conveyor belts.

Regardless of how the airport pick-up occurs, please keep in mind the following tips for your first physical encounter with the student:

- Although not necessary, it is encouraged to prepare a "welcome" sign with the student's name. This will help the student identify you and will act as a nice, welcoming gesture to help the student feel more at ease.

- In the Spanish culture, a common greeting for a female student is to give two kisses on the cheeks, starting from the left side. As for male students, the two kisses are common when the greeting is towards a female; otherwise, a handshake is typically chosen when the greeting is towards a male. However, a short hug may be a good option regardless of the gender of the student and the person meeting them.
- To get to Ottawa, the student will have travelled over 15 hours and will most likely be tired and may feel particularly quiet or shy. Please be vigilant of the student's state and try to be accommodating. It is advised not to make big plans for the rest of the day so that the student can recover and adjust to their new environment.
- Please help the student with their luggage, as it might be quite heavy.
- Check in with the Go Canada chaperone before you and your student leave the airport. If airport entry restrictions are still in place, a text to the Go Canada chaperone before leaving with the student will suffice.
- On the drive home from the airport, try to make friendly conversation, while also being vigilant of the student's level of tiredness. Good points of conversation are:
    - Asking about the flight;
    - Singling out and discussing points of interest as you drive along;
    - Letting the student know the plan for the rest of the day.
- As soon as you reach the house, provide the student with the WIFI information and encourage them to contact their parents.
- The student's room should be ready with clean sheets, towels, and toiletries. From now and for the rest of their time with you, please respect the student's private space and always knock and announce yourself before entering their bedroom. If you expect to enter their room when they are not home, make this clear on day one.

7.2 YOUR STUDENT'S FIRST WEEK(S) IN OTTAWA PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Depending on the arrival date, during their first week or two in Ottawa, students will not be attending school. This will give students the opportunity to get settled in, acquainted with the city, and accustomed to the rules and expectations of the household. Providing clear directions and expectations concerning household routines will go a long way in creating a positive homestay experience for the student as well as the family. At the beginning of the student's stay, it is advised to have a full family meeting to go over the household rules. Please use this time to check off the things listed below.

- Give student a tour of the house and the neighborhood.
- Explain to the student the house rules regarding:
    - meal times;
    - where food can and cannot be eaten;

- if tap water is safe to drink;
- recycling practices;
- laundry;
- showers/bathing;
- curfews;
- Internet use.

- Explain your policy on shoes in the house. In Spain, individuals leave their shoes on in the house, so for a student that has never lived away from home, the rule to take shoes off when entering a home may be foreign and should be explained.
- Discuss expectations regarding daily chores (tidying up after themselves, putting dishes in the dishwasher, etc.). These chores should be age-acceptable. Expectations should not surpass what you would expect of your own children.
- Show student how to use appliances and entertainment, like dishwasher, TV, microwave, computer, security system, etc. Have the student practice with you.
- Outline your family's expectations regarding the preparation of breakfasts and lunches. If you expect the student to prepare their own breakfast and/or lunch on school days, please show the student where to get the ingredients and how to prepare and package (if applicable) the meals. **Students in Spain generally don't prepare their own meals**, so your help will be appreciated.
- Take student grocery shopping so that they could pick out things they like to eat and for you to get familiar with their preferences so that you could purchase appropriate items in the future.
- Help student set up the phone with Canadian number.
- Explain how 9-1-1 works for emergencies, as it is different from Spain.
- Tell student what to do in case of fire.
- Provide student with a list of contacts, such as your home, cell, and work numbers and agree on a communication strategy. Some individuals prefer WhatsApp, others texts, while others prefer calls. It is necessary to establish how you prefer to be reached so as to ensure that no attempt at communication is left unnoticed.
- Show student where the nearest bus stop and community facilities are.
- Discuss things to do during the first few days and weeks. Suggesting some fun family-oriented activities could be a great way to break the ice and build an initial bond.
- Show girls where to buy personal supplies.
- Take student to and from orientation session (refer to Section 7.4 for further information).
- Show student how to get to and from school. If the student will require to take public transportation to commute to and from school, you must show the route by going with the student on the bus, both ways. If the student can walk to school, please walk with the student to show them the route.

- If applicable, take student to and from activities organized by the international student program, or show them how to commute (refer to Section 7.5 for further information).
- If applicable, help the student purchase a public transportation pass. Go Canada will let you know in advance if the student you will be hosting qualifies to obtain a costless public transportation pass from their school.

7.3 ORIENTATION

The school district will organize an orientation during the week leading to the start of the classes. Details on the orientation will be provided prior to the student's arrival. Homestay families are expected to facilitate transportation to and from orientation. If a family is unable to provide transportation, it should be ensured that the student knows his/her way to the designated location.

7.4 ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD

Each year, the International Student Department at OCDSB and at the other school districts we work with organizes several activities for international students. While these activities are not mandatory, they are highly encouraged. Several activities are organized prior to the beginning of the academic year and are free of charge. Students are encouraged to participate, as this will allow them to meet other international students, have fun, and get to know the program coordinators a little better.

In order to participate in all other activities, students will need to sign up and pay the applicable fees online. Further information will be sent to each student outlining the sign-up dates and procedures. Go Canada has no affiliation with these trips and trips are subject to changes from year to year. The most updated list of activities organized by the OCDSB can be found here.

As for other school districts (if applicable), the activity information will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

7.5 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Typically, first day of school is the day after Labour Day. However, this will be confirmed by each school district at a later stage. On this day, students will meet with their academic advisors at their designated school to select courses and register for any activities that they may be interested in. Students are to proceed directly to their appointment upon arrival at school. Homestay families are expected to provide transportation on the first day of school and escort the student to their appointment. As you can imagine, the first day of school may cause apprehension for most students, so giving them the needed support and bringing them directly to the academic advisor's office will be highly appreciated. As this will be a normal school day, please ensure that the student has their packed lunch, the necessary school supplies (binder, pen, pencil, eraser, paper, etc.) and that you are available to pick them up after school. Please note that if you have already shown the student the way to and from school using public transportation, and the

student feels comfortable getting home on their own, it is not necessary to pick up the student at the end of the school day. **It is, however, important that you bring the student to school in the morning in order to ensure they get to their appointment on time and can help them navigate the school.**

8. WHILE YOU HOST

8.1 MEALS

The host family is expected to provide 3 nourishing meals per day and snacks. During the first few days after arrival, it is advised to take the student grocery shopping and encourage them to pick out things they like to eat. This will open up a conversation about food and ensure that the student feels comfortable with the food served at the house. While students should be encouraged to adjust to the Canadian culture, including mealtime practices, please also be aware of the following potential cultural food differences:

- Olive oil is abundantly used in the Spanish cuisine;
- Biggest meal is eaten at lunch;
- Lunch is typically eaten between 2-3 pm, while dinner is eaten around 9-10 pm;
- Spicy food is not typical and not easily tolerated;
- Mealtime is a cherished activity to socialize and spend quality time with family;
- Meals are not eaten on-the-go.

8.1.1 BREAKFAST

At breakfast, the student can prepare their own meal, or the host can prepare the meal for the student. In either case, be sure the student knows where the food is kept and what options are available. Breakfast should include a combination of the following:

- Protein such as yogurt, cheese, eggs, peanut butter or cereal with milk;
- Fruit;
- Bread, muffin, waffles or pancakes; and
- A beverage such as milk, juice, tea, or coffee.

Common feedback we receive from our past students is that they love to prepare a “typical” Canadian breakfast together with the homestay family on the weekends, which can include pancakes, bacon/sausages/ham, eggs, etc. This could be a fantastic activity to try on the weekends that the student would greatly appreciate!

8.1.2 LUNCH

A packed lunch should be provided to the student during the school week. Many students have never prepared lunch by themselves, so please be patient in showing them how. In Spain, it is not typical to eat sandwiches every day for lunch, so the student will appreciate variety. A good lunch option is to pack leftovers from dinner the night before. A packed lunch should consist of:

- Protein;
- Bread;
- Vegetables and/or fruit;
- Snack; and
- Beverage.

8.1.3 DINNER

Dinner is to be prepared by the host. Make sure the student is aware of dinnertime and please encourage them to join you for the meal as often as possible. Sitting together at dinner is a great opportunity for students and hosts to share conversation, bond, and for the student to practice English. If the student is to be away for dinnertime, a meal should be available for them when they return, unless agreed beforehand that the student will not be eating at the house. Dinner should consist of:

- Protein source (meat, chicken, fish, legumes, etc.);
- Vegetables or salad;
- A carbohydrate such as rice, potatoes, pasta or bread; and
- A beverage.

Fast food/take-out dinners should be limited to no more than once a week.

8.1.4 GENERAL NOTE ABOUT FOOD

In respect to meals in general, please serve your usual fare, but note what the student is eating. They may be too embarrassed or shy to let you know that they don't like something, or that the portion is not enough. Please note that students are usually teenagers who are still developing, so it is not uncommon that they require to eat a lot of food. Always have extras just in case and offer seconds, while also not being too persistent. To get a better idea of the student's satisfaction with food, observe the following:

- Does the student finish his or her plate very quickly?
- Does the student feel like he or she is unenthusiastic about the food being served?
- Does the student make plans to eat out with friends often? Although it may simply mean that the student is social, it often indicates that the student is not too pleased with the food being served at home.

Comfort foods are a great way to help the student feel more at ease living away from home, so if you see something at the supermarket from Spain, or if you would like to visit a nearby Spanish restaurant, the student would surely appreciate the gesture! Another great activity is to prepare a typical Spanish meal at home and encourage the student to participate (or to take charge of the operation!). As with most cases, Spanish people are proud of their culture and would love to share parts of it with you.

8.2 HEALTH INSURANCE

Each student will have all the proper medical insurance coverage for the duration of their stay. Students will have full medical coverage from the day they arrive in Canada and until they leave the country. As an example, information on the insurance provided by OCDSB, including the claims procedure, can be found here. For other school districts, GoCanada will provide the information prior to the student's arrival.

Students will be informed regarding medical insurance functioning at the orientation session held during the last week of August and receive their policy information and eCard via email within the first few days upon arrival. Please ensure that the student shares the policy information with you, prints out the foldable eCard sent by the insurance provider and carries it at all times. Please have the information available for any doctor's visits and provide the medical insurance information to the clinic right away.

In case of an emergency, the homestay family should call the phone number shown on the student's insurance eCard and coordinate the best way to proceed. It is always preferred that the student does not need to pay anything when they go to a clinic, and the best way to secure this is by calling the insurance company.

If a clinic requires the student to pay the fee for the visit and any completed procedures, it is of utmost importance that the student is provided with official receipts and any medical report that may have been issued to use for reimbursement. The same applies if the student is prescribed medication and needs to purchase it at a pharmacy. The student must keep such documents to complete the medical insurance claim, with the assistance of the host family. For OCDSB students, it is possible to find detailed instructions on how to submit a claim (including the medical insurance claim form) here.

If you have any questions regarding the functioning of the insurance policy or how to submit a claim, please contact GoCanada. We will be happy to assist you.

8.3 WINTER CLOTHES

Temperatures in Ottawa during the winter differ significantly from those students are used to in Spain. Many of them have never experienced the low temperatures that Ottawa residents have to face each year, and it is not uncommon for them to not bring appropriate clothes for the season. Students will appreciate any advice coming from their homestay family concerning winter clothes, including going shopping with them, if needed. Please bear in mind that in most cases the student will only be in Canada for one winter,

so do not advise them to purchase very expensive clothes, as they will have no practical use for them back in Spain, and many times they will not even have space in their luggage to bring them back home. If a member of your family has a winter coat or any other item that they do not plan to use or that they don't mind sharing, offering it to the student will be seen as a kind gesture and will probably save them hundreds of dollars.

Some students may be too shy or will try to avoid trouble asking for help regarding this matter, so a good way to face the issue is to approach the student when temperatures begin to drop and discuss with them if what they brought is enough. Then, agree on an action plan, if needed.

8.4 MONEY

Students will have money available for personal expenses such as field trips, movie outings, dinners out with friends, shopping, etc. If you plan to go out for a meal as a family, you are expected to bear the cost of the student's food, as you have agreed to provide three meals per day. You are not to lend money to the student and the student should not ask to borrow money. If the latter occurs, please notify Go Canada. In the same manner, the student should never be asked to lend money to the homestay family, even if it is just because they don't have cash at the time and need to make a payment. Typically, students will bring some cash with them upon arrival and will have access to their debit/credit card for use during their stay. Their bank card will be linked to their parents' account, which the parents will be able to monitor as they deem fit. If, due to extraordinary circumstances, the homestay family has to make a payment on behalf of the student, the relevant receipts must be immediately sent to the student's family or Go Canada for a prompt reimbursement by the former.

In the event of the student joining the homestay family's vacation, partial or full payment of transportation, accommodation and board may be requested. This will need to be agreed in writing beforehand by the student's parents/legal guardians and the homestay family.

8.5 CONVERSATION

One of the main objectives of the student's experience is to improve English. While some students already have a strong English base, others may have only basic knowledge of the language. The ability and willingness to communicate freely in English may also depend largely on the individual. Some students are quiet and shy, so they may feel overly apprehensive and insecure to speak English. Other students are outgoing and chatty, and may have an easier time to "go with the flow" to make themselves understood.

Whatever the case is, there are certain points you can keep in mind to help the student grow and become a more proficient English speaker:

- Be patient;
- Talk slowly and separate your words;

- Avoid using excessive slang;
- When you do use idioms and slang, explain what you mean. This will help the student learn the way Canadians "really" speak.
- Avoid asking, "Do you understand?" Students will typically say "Yes" for the sake of harmony.
- Instead, ask the student to tell you what they think you are saying.
- If you see that the student is not understanding something, try rephrasing.
- Ask student open-ended questions, such as "What activities do you enjoy during your free time?"
- Do not try to correct every mistake the student makes when speaking. This can often make the student feel insecure and can make them lose their train of thought. Instead, wait for the student to finish, and then make the necessary corrections, if necessary.
- Even if you or some member of the family can speak Spanish, please avoid using it in front of the student.
- Most importantly, speak English at all times and be genuine in your conversations. If the student feels your warmth, lack of judgement, eagerness to help and bond, and your sincere interest in their well-being, they will gain confidence and be more eager to communicate!

8.5.1 TYPICAL MISTAKES MADE BY SPANISH STUDENTS IN ENGLISH

- Using "to have" instead of "to be" for phrases such as:
  - I have cold (I am cold);
  - I have 15 years (I am 15 years old);
  - I have hungry (I am hungry);
  - I have sleep (I am sleepy).
- Interchanging "he" and "she" when speaking:
  - In Spanish, pronouns are typically left out of the conversation because Spanish verb endings often render them redundant. This leads to a lot of individuals interchanging "he" and "she" or "his" and "hers" when speaking in English.
- Saying "I am boring" when they actually mean "I am bored".
- Using "funny" when they actually mean "fun", or vice versa:
  - Watching horror films is funny (Watching horror films is fun);
  - The soccer game was funny (The soccer game was fun).

8.6 DEALING WITH ISSUES OR CONCERNS

8.6.1 CONFLICT RESOLUTION – WHO DO I CONTACT?

If you have a problem you would like to discuss with us, we are always here to help and support you. We will assist you in any way we can and will act as a mediator between you, the student, the student's parents/legal guardians, and the student's school, as necessary.

For contact information, please refer to Section 2.

8.6.2 CHANGE OF HOMESTAY

Homestay placements are not a science, so although precautions are taken to ensure the best matches possible, sometimes things just don't work out and the student may need to be moved. This is not to be viewed as criticism on the part of the homestay family nor the student.

If, for whatever reason, the match isn't working out, a homestay switch can be requested by both the student and the homestay family. Some reasons are more likely than others to result in a homestay switch, for example, if either the homestay family or the student do not meet the expectations outlined in Section 5.

In any event, prior to initiating the switch, we will always do our best to mediate and remedy the issue. Often, the issue can be resolved through communication and mutual understanding. If a solution cannot be found to make both parties happy, we will:

- Ensure the homestay switch is dealt with delicately as to minimize any uncomfortable moments between the students and their current homestay;
- Ensure the switch is made as quickly as possible; however, please be patient as it may take some time for us to find another suitable homestay family for the student;
- Coordinate the pick-up arrangements with the new homestay family;
- Coordinate any refunds that may apply.

Please note that the students we send to study in Ottawa are teenagers, which is a very delicate age. They are still very dependent on their parents and will seek their attention first, should a problem arise.

Sometimes, the student's version of events will differ from yours, but it is likely that the parents will tend to put greater importance on what their child is saying. In this circumstance, we will ensure to get both sides of the story and mediate accordingly. Please understand that sometimes, although you may feel that the student's points are unwarranted, the parents will still demand a homestay change even after adequate mediation. In this situation, we will be obliged to honour the parents' wishes to make the switch.

8.7 HOMESTAY COORDINATOR VISITS

To join Go Canada's Homestay Program, all host families will be required to have an in-person interview at their home with a Go Canada Coordinator. Additionally, prior to hosting a student, our local Homestay

Coordinator in Ottawa will schedule a brief visit with you to prepare you for the experience and make sure the information we have on file is up-to-date.

Likewise, our local Homestay Coordinator in Ottawa will schedule one visit per semester with each student to check in and ensure that there are no issues or concerns. Unless otherwise agreed, this visit will take place at the homestay. After meeting with the student, the Homestay Coordinator may also ask to briefly speak with the host to make sure that the host is happy with the hosting experience and to discuss any potential concerns.

You will be contacted via email by one of Go Canada's Coordinators to set up any and all homestay visits.

8.8 CUSTODIANSHIP

Each student will be assigned a custodian to act as their legal guardian in front of the Government of Canada during their stay in Canada. Students will be given their assigned custodian's contact information. This person can be contacted in case of emergency, but will not deal with day-to-day matters the way Homestay and Program Coordinators do. Unless otherwise specified, your student's custodian will be **Stephane Lavoie**, as outline in Section 2.

8.9 STUDENT REPORTS

As much as it is hard for a student to embark on the adventure to study abroad, it is also hard for the student's family to let their child go. To give the student's family back home a peace of mind, **progress reports will be prepared and sent to the student's family 2 weeks after the student's arrival and every 3 months after the student's arrival, starting from their first day with you**. Go Canada will ask the student to also complete these reports from their point of view in order to ensure that there are no big discrepancies in responses. This will help ensure that both parties are on the same page in terms of how things are going. Should a big discrepancy occur, a Go Canada representative will take the necessary steps to discuss the situation and ensure that the matter does not escalate into a problem. For returning homestays, please note that the reports are now a lot shorter and easier to fill out.

The initial Progress Report must be filled out 2 weeks after the student's arrival. You may fill out and submit the online form here.

Following the Initial Report, please submit a completed Progress Report every third month the student is with you. Again, you may fill out and submit the online form here.

For example, if the student arrives on August 28th, the following Progress Report schedule would apply:

Progress Report	Date to be submitted
Initial report	September 11
Progress report 1	November 27
Progress report 2	February 26
Progress report 3	May 28

If you are hosting a short-term student, only the Progress Reports corresponding to their time with you will apply. For example, if you are hosting a student for 3 months, you will need to submit the Initial Report and Progress Report 1.

The Program Coordinator will get in touch with you periodically to remind you when the report is due. This is also a great chance to reflect on any issues that may have come up and raise any concerns to the Program Coordinator.

It goes without saying that information regarding the student's stay with the homestay family is not limited to the scheduled progress reports. If there is a matter that you would like to discuss with us, feel free to do so regardless of the time.

8.10 REPORT CARD AND PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEW

High school students will receive two reports each semester: a progress report card approximately half way through the semester and a final report card at the end of the semester.

Host families are invited to participate in Parent-Teacher interviews if they want to. While not mandatory, this could help you understand the student's needs in order to be able to provide the appropriate assistance.

8.11 CURFEW

International students are expected to be home at a reasonable time every night to ensure that they stay safe and healthy. On school nights, international students are expected to be home by 9:00 pm, as suggested by the Ottawa Carleton District School Board's International Student Program (OISP). The OISP weekend curfew guidelines are as follows:

Grade	Weekend Curfew
Grade 9	10:00pm
Grade 10	11:00pm
Grade 11	12:00am
Grade 12	1:00am

Although these are the general guidelines, each homestay may have different expectations, so curfew should be discussed and agreed upon prior to hosting or upon the student's arrival.

8.12 TRAVEL

8.12.1 OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF OTTAWA

Students are not allowed to travel outside of the city, with the homestay family or on their own, unless they have written permission from their parents/legal guardians. If you wish to take a trip outside of Ottawa as a family, your international student may join you, but please notify us of the trip beforehand. Likewise, if the student is interested in taking a trip outside of the city of Ottawa without the host present, Go Canada must be notified beforehand and written permission from the parents must be obtained.

To notify Go Canada of the trip/activity, please fill out and submit this Trip Authorization form at least 7 days prior to the event taking place, or as soon as scheduled, if this happens within such 7 days. We will use the information you provide in the form to contact the student's family to ask for written confirmation regarding the trip. Once authorization has been received, Go Canada will confirm you via email, at which point, the trip and/or activity will be deemed authorized.

If the student is to travel without the host parents, and the parents' permission has been received, the student must provide the homestay family with a detailed itinerary of such travel, including the names and addresses of those the student will be travelling with and staying with during such travel.

8.12.2 OUTSIDE OF CANADA

While students may travel outside of Canada during their stay, it will be necessary to obtain their parents' written permission and assess if any paperwork is required. As such, if you are planning on travelling outside of Canada and wish to invite the student to come along, please notify us as soon as possible using this form.

Students are not to travel outside of Canada on their own. It is the responsibility of the student and the student's parents to research and obtain the necessary documents required for travel.

8.13 PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS AND MARCH BREAK

If you are hosting a student for the full academic year, we will relay to you their plans for Christmas holidays and March Break prior to their arrival. Some students will choose to go back to Spain during this time, while others will choose to stay and live these experiences in Canada. In some cases, the student may change their mind about staying in Canada or going back home, so please be flexible in accommodating them, if needed. If applicable, we will inform you of any changes right away. If the student does decide to go back to Spain for the holidays, airport transfers should be provided and are included in the monthly fee. Likewise, the student should be able to leave any personal belongings they wish and their room should be kept unoccupied during this time, unless explicitly agreed upon differently beforehand. The monthly fee

will not be reduced due to the student going home during the holidays.

If your student does stay in Canada, whatever you plan, make sure to include the student. Normally if you travel, the student may join you and pay for their partial or full travel expenses (e.g., hotel, flights, etc.). Please refer to Section 8.12 for further information.

Please note that some exceptions can be made to the above-stated information on a case-by-case basis.

8.14 SCHOOL ABSENCES

If the student is ill on a school day, they must have permission from a host parent to be absent from school. Homestay family should notify the school when the student is ill. If the procedure is not followed, the student's absence will be considered as a "skip".

9. DEPARTURE

Students staying 1 month will be leaving at the end of September; students staying 2 months will be leaving at the end of October; students staying 3 months will be leaving at the end of November; students staying 4 months will be leaving at the end of December; students staying 5 months will be leaving at the end of January and; students staying 10 months will be leaving at the end of June of the following year. Exact dates and details will be provided to you in a separate document in due time.

As time comes to say "goodbye", we hope that you will have gained a lot from the experience and will have developed a lasting bond with your student. We encourage all our homestay families to keep in touch with their students, and who knows, maybe one day you will have the chance to visit them in Spain or see them again in Ottawa!

Most students will go back to Spain directly and will require airport drop-off. We will send you all the details regarding departure a few weeks before. Other students will take the opportunity to travel and see more of Canada with the company of their families. These students may organize flights to meet their family at a different city than Ottawa, or may have the family come to Ottawa to pick them up. This will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and we will let you know beforehand what your student decides.

If the student will not have their family come pick them up in Ottawa, please note the following:

- You are requested to drive the student to the airport and accompany them until they meet the rest of the group they will be traveling with (if applicable) or are ready to go through luggage control;
- Please make sure the student's checked in luggage adheres to weight restrictions, which is usually 23 kg;
- Please make sure the student's carry-on luggage respects the rules of air travel (i.e., No sharp objects, liquids must be stored in one clear Ziplock bag and each bottle cannot exceed 100 mL, etc.).

In all cases, prior to the student's departure, please ensure the following:

- Have the student return the house key to you;
- Have the student return any borrowed items such as books, calculators, etc.;
- We will contact you with detailed information and instructions before departure day.

10. FINAL THOUGHTS

We hope you have read this Guide for Homestay Families thoroughly and it has proven to be beneficial. It was prepared with the sole purpose to help you with the hosting experience and provide you with valuable suggestions. Please familiarize yourself with this Guide and refer back to it from time to time as you may deem necessary.

If there is something we did not address, or if you have lingering questions or concerns, please call or email us whenever you need to. We're here to help!

Thank you very much and we look forward to a lasting relationship with you and your family!

Sincerely, The GoCanada Team