

RELA Homestay Newsletter – June 2018

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to quite a number of new homestays who will begin hosting for us in June-July –August, and many thanks to all our “old faithfuls”. As I often say to you, the homestay experience you offer our students is usually more important than the school or location experience. Homestay is what most of our students are most nervous about before they come. Does my homestay really want me, or do they just want the money? Will they like me?

Please read all Teri’s messages below. Lots of useful information

Best wishes and thanks to all

Chris

Special Care of Students under 16 years

If we have told you that your student needs extra care/transport to and from RELA each day, you will be paid \$20 per week for this service. You are then expected to transport your student to and from school each day, please.

If your student/s wish to go out with friends (to the cinema or the Thursday night market, for example) their pick-up arrangements need to be clearly made with YOU.

In the past the Thursday night market has been a huge hit with our students from Tahiti, especially during June and July. Please make sure you communicate with your student clearly, before Thursday, where exactly you’ll meet them and what time. We’ve found that Post Shop / Kiwibank or Starbucks have been popular meeting spots. They should NOT arrange to meet back at RELA after the market as it is dark and often raining in July.

A lot of our younger students are not confident or communicative when they first arrive, and a few of them stay that way while they are here. Don’t worry too much about this, but please make them feel that they are welcome to join you and be with you. If someone stays in their bedroom a lot, often it is out of habit. While they are in Rotorua, we need them to join you on family activities, cooking, watching movies, walking, and so on.

Students from Tahiti and New Caledonia LOVE to shop when they’re in Rotorua. Many of them have to buy clothes and goods for their families, and often they like to meet their friends during the weekend. This is OK with us, but you should gather the following information for yourself:

- List of some of the friends’ names your student will be meeting
- Drop off and pick up point (often Starbucks is a good place)
- Be very clear on the time your student needs to meet you (daylight hours)
- Make sure your student has your phone number and their student ID card with them

Often students or parents like to contact you directly before coming to NZ. Please send them a warm reply as quickly as you can. It's reassuring for the parents and students to know that you're looking forward to welcoming them in to your home and family.

We are open from 8am – 5pm and students are very welcome to be here during these hours. As well as a games room where students can play pool, table tennis and some other ball sports, we offer after school activities that they may wish to join. Please see the RELA website for up to date information on the activities we're offering <http://rela.co.nz/accommodation/homestaying-rela/>

We would appreciate you collecting your student from RELA each day by 4.45pm, please. We cannot leave work until the last young student has gone ☺

Payments to host families for 2019 and Christmas/Easter payments

- Homestay fee per student: \$215
- Weekday lunches: \$25
- Weekday transport to and from school: \$40
- Surcharge for one or two week stays at Easter, Christmas and New Year. This only applies to students who enrol for one or two weeks over these periods: \$50 per Public Holiday day

Parking and dropping off students

When we have big numbers of students in homestays, we have all kinds of problems with drop offs and pick ups, like most schools! When you use the parking bay outside RELA, please do not angle park when you are dropping off. Please move along the broken yellow lines, away from the entrances, ask your student/s to get out quickly, and keep moving along to an exit. In July there will be up to 100 cars dropping students off within a period of 20-30 minutes every morning.

Communicating with us

We like to have all messages by e-mail, as we often need to go back to check if there is miscommunication. If you need to get an urgent message to a student, please ask whoever answers the phone to pass it on.

Paula and I use our personal mobiles for text messages that we want to pass on quickly. If you need help during school hours, after school or during the weekend, please always use the RELA number or email english@rela.co.nz In an emergency call the school number 07 3490473 (This is a 24/7 number and will be answered by one of our office staff).

Arrival and Departure Information

We will normally tell you what time your student will arrive or leave no later than the Thursday before they are due to come or go. We need to wait for the shuttle company to give us the estimated times. Sometimes you will have a student coming and another going. We ask you to please reply to each email to confirm that you have received each separate lot of information. Your speedy replies are much appreciated! **And it means much less chasing up for me to do.**

Activities at RELA

Our 1 - 3 activities timetable and after school and weekend activities are uploaded to the RELA website every Thursday. If you want to know what your activity student is doing or what we have planned please look here <http://rela.co.nz/accommodation/homestay-rela/>. The activity students are given a hard copy each Monday.

If a student is part of a Tour Group you will receive an itinerary, homestay contact list and in most cases your student's accommodation form a week or two before the group arrives.

When we send you the initial email with a homestay request if your student is part of a Tour Group we will tell you this. If they are not, then you can count on them being a regular student who has either enrolled at RELA independently or through an agent. These students DO NOT have an itinerary. Tahiti students are NOT part of a Tour Group.

If we have an accommodation form for your student we will email it to you. Unfortunately we do not receive these for every student.

If you are unsure of something a good place to start is your Homestay Manual or RELA contract. If you need a hard copy of either of these please let us know and we can have them ready for you to collect from the office. You will also find the most up to date Manual and contract on our website <http://rela.co.nz/files/2014/07/Manual-for-Homestay-Families-Booklet.pdf>

Thank you for your continued support!

Chris, Teri and Paula ☺