

BILLETING FAQs

What are the key expectations of Host Families?

Billeting provides a unique opportunity for our visitors to immerse themselves in a typical Australian family experience and host families provide a “home away from home” for their guests. In practical terms, the key expectations of host families include:

- transporting billets to the correct locations at the correct times (this will always be around the schools local area)
- providing all meals not organised as part of the itinerary;
- providing packed lunches school days and other specified days,
- doing the visitors’ laundry if required,
- entertaining billet while they are in your home

What do I get out of it?

Apart from the amazing experience of opening your home to an international student, the program does offer financial recognition of your efforts. For each Chinese student you billet, you will receive \$480. This is \$36.92 per night that they stay with you. This money should be used to cover any costs you incur while the student is in your home.

How many billets will be placed with my family?

This will be decided in consultation with host families. Ultimately, we would like families to host more than 1 student. This allows them the comfort of a familiar face and you the benefit that they can often entertain each other. However, if you are only able to host 1 student, that is perfectly acceptable. The number of students your family will host will always be organised in consultation with the host family.

What does the itinerary look like?

A copy of the billeting student’s itinerary has been attached.

Am I required to accompany billets on day trips and tours?

Exchange students will accompany their Homestay students to school each day. Host students will accompany the Exchange students on any excursions that occur during their time at Picton High School. Host families are invited to attend the Opening and Closing ceremonies. If the host family chose to take the student out on weekends or after school, it is essential that they are maintaining responsibility for that student. Please remember that our billets must be under the care of a responsible adult at all times.

Are there additional expenses for the host family?

Not really. Host families obviously supply meals and lunches not provided for in the itinerary. If you decide to take your billets on an outing during their free time, you would normally pay any costs for them. The visiting children will usually have a modest amount of spending money, which they like to put towards souvenirs and gifts for their families back home. These expenses should be covered by the payment issued to you.

Will our billets speak English?

Many Chinese students are able to understand some English. However, conversational English may be limited. Your specific billets level of English should be conveyed to you as a part of their profile. There are many Apps that can help with translating English to Mandarin or Cantonese and vice versa, and you'll find one of these very helpful. You'll be amazed how much communication can take place, even with limited shared language skills! It would be a nice gesture to try and learn a few everyday Mandarin words – the Chinese really appreciate our efforts to do so!

Do the billets need their own bedroom?

Ideally, host families will be able to provide billets with their own space, be it a bedroom, or another area of the house that can be used by your visitors during their stay. Billets won't mind temporary bedding arrangements, provided they are comfortable and have some privacy.

Will billets be happy to eat typical Australian food?

Try it and see! However, it might be a good idea to have some standby food (e.g. rice or noodles) just in case your billets are not overly adventurous when it comes to eating. The individual student profiles will inform you of any allergies to be aware of. Alternatively, you can ask them beforehand via email if you like to be prepared!

I know that gift giving is customary in China. What does this mean for the host family?

Gifts are a very important element of Chinese culture and etiquette. Host families can choose to give a small, personal gift to their guests if they wish. In addition to these personal gifts, the school will organise a small gift for each student.

What do I do if I have a problem while the student is with me?

While we hope that your experience with your exchange student runs smoothly, there is always the chance that a problem may arise. This includes the exchange student becoming ill or upset. During school hours, you can contact Miss Smith in English. Outside of school hours, Miss Smith will have a designated mobile phone that you can call. You will be given this number closer to the exchange student's arrival.

More information

For more information, please contact the Exchange Organiser, Ruth Smith, on ruth.smith19@det.nsw.edu.au or through the school.