

SCOUTS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (SISEP) Host Family Information Guide





Scouts International Student
Exchange Program
(SISEP)

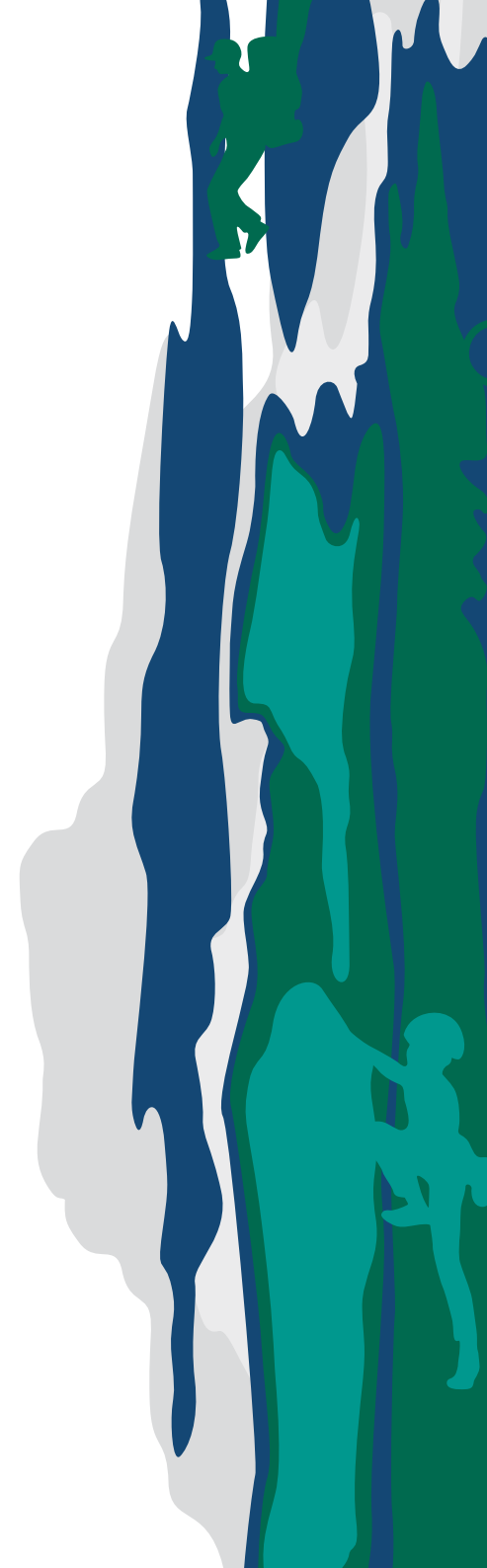
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Welcome

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you and to thank you for your participation in our Exchange Program. Staying with a local “Scouting” family is one of the most important aspects of the youth member’s experience in Australia. Your involvement and care are extremely important to us.

We try to match the youth member and the family as best as we can in order to ensure a great experience for both parties. We hope it will benefit you both in terms of cultural exchange, entertainment and friendship. Hosting an international youth member is an opportunity to gain a lifetime of memories and we truly hope that your youth member’s stay will allow you to do so. This guide will provide you with an overview of your role in our program and will outline your responsibilities in hosting a youth member.

Our Branch Coordinators will also be with you every step of the way and have a wealth of knowledge. Feel free to contact them with any questions you have along the way – they are here to help you. There will also be an Orientation Day which your Branch Coordinator SISEP will be in touch with the date and location.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SISEP PROGRAM

The Scouts International Student Exchange Program (SISEP) is an educational and cultural exchange experience operated by Scouts Australia through Branch Coordinators. It encourages international goodwill and understanding between Australia and other Scouting countries through the facilitation of an exchange experience for Venturer Scouts. The Program enables Venturer Scouts to experience life in another country through:

- » Participating in local Scouting activities
- » Living with a local Scout family
- » Acting as an ambassador for their country
- » Attending school

The exchange environment will most likely be very different to that at home. Participants will be challenged through exposure to the different cultural values, customs, attitudes and ideologies of the host country, family and school. This will facilitate self-development and global understanding.

Welcome

They will share their knowledge and love of their own country and lifestyle by addressing Scouts and school in the host country. Similarly, they will also have opportunities to share their knowledge and experience of life in the host country on their return home.

The Scouts International Student Exchange Program will provide a wonderful opportunity for both exchangees and hosts.

Scouts Australia through the Branch associations will provide on-going support to both the Host Family and the Exchangee at all stages of the Program.

If you have any questions at any stage, please contact your Branch Coordinator SISEP.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CLEARANCES AND NATIONAL POLICE CHECKS

Your Branch Coordinator SISEP will advise you on how you can apply to have these checks done dependant on which state you reside in. Both of these checks will be required for any family member in your home who is 18 years and over.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT HOMESTAY?

As a Homestay family, use your caring and nurturing talents to make your international youth member feel accepted as a member of your family as it can be overwhelming for them to be so far away from their home and family. You need to be aware of their emotional and physical wellness. They deserve proper care - emotional and physical. They need the same care you would give to your own child.

They also need to feel that you genuinely care about them. If they feel this, the bonding process will be much easier.

Welcome

AS A HOST FAMILY, WHAT ARE YOU EXPECTED TO PROVIDE?

A Host Family is expected to:

- » Provide a safe, secure and friendly family environment
- » Greet and farewell the youth member at the airport (alternative arrangements may be made for a host family living outside metropolitan districts)
- » Provide a private bedroom (unless other arrangements have been made)
- » Arrange transport for the youth member to attend School
- » Facilitate the involvement of the youth member in Venturer Unit and Scout Group activities
- » Include the youth member as a family member
- » Guide the youth member in community safety considerations, including the use of public transport
- » Take an active interest in the youth member's academic progress, social life and interest
- » Encourage the youth member to enjoy a well-balanced life
- » Ensure the youth member is maintaining an acceptable diet and routines of eating

- » Monitor the home based routines of the youth member and report any concerns to the Branch Coordinator SISEP, particularly overuse of recreational technology
- » Provide three meals per day each day of the week and reasonable access for the youth member to healthy snacks such as fresh fruit between meals
- » Assist the youth member with transport where convenient to do so
- » Train the youth member on safe and energy efficient use of all homestay amenities
- » Ensure the youth member complies with laundry routines of the home so as to ensure that the youth member always has access to laundered clothes
- » Report any instance of late arrival home by the youth member to the Branch Coordinator SISEP
- » Report any requests made by the youth member to the host family such as:
 - » Plans to attend a social gathering beyond curfew hours
 - » Plans to organise a social event/part at the Homestay or at a public venue
 - » Plans to stay overnight at the home of somebody else

Preparation

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE FOR THE ARRIVAL OF YOUR YOUTH MEMBER?

Having agreed to become a host family, you should immediately start preparing to host the inbound youth member. In making the decision, you should have discussed the implications of hosting with other members of the family living at home, especially those who may be of a similar age to the hosted student.

Learn as much as you can about the youth member you will host, their background, interests, likes and dislikes etc. Host families should begin to communicate with the inbound student as soon as possible.

The Branch Coordinator SISEP will give you a copy of the youth member's profile. Thanks to that document you can read the student's likes/dislikes, where he/she comes from and see his/her picture.

Some youth members like to correspond with the Homestay family via email before arriving in Australia. This is encouraged.

- » The Homestay family should be generally familiar with the youth member's country: its population, climate, lifestyle, food, major cities, etc. Your knowledge of this information will not only make your youth member feel more

at home, it will also encourage acceptance of your way of life.

- » Make sure the youth member's room is ready. The room should be fully furnished with at least a bed, dresser, lamp, and closet. Also, your youth member may be cold at night, so provide some extra blankets or even a portable heater, if necessary.
- » Many International youth members come with extra clothing and luggage. Make sure there is enough room in their bedroom or elsewhere for storage, so that the bedroom does not become overly cluttered.
- » Ensure adequate home insurance is in place

COLLECTING YOUR YOUTH MEMBER FROM THE AIRPORT

A Branch Coordinator (or their representative) will go to the airport in full uniform to welcome overseas youth members and also for their departure to assist with check in. If a representative is being used please notify the National Coordinator SISEP in a timely manner, so that the appropriate mobile number can be distributed and a full duty of care can be provided. Coordinators are requested to ask host family members in the Scouting movement to also wear full scout uniform to the airport.

Preparation

ARRIVAL AT THE HOUSE

When your youth member arrives, they probably have had a long trip and have crossed several time zones. Avoid scheduling too many activities. The ill effects of jet lag will be much less if they set their watch immediately to local time. Also, suggest they drink plenty of water, get lots of fresh air and avoid sleeping during the day, if possible.

- » Give your youth member the password to your internet as they will be keen to let their parents know they have arrived. Perhaps suggest to them that the most economical way for them to keep in touch with family and friends will be via Messenger or Skype.
- » Show them where they can store their extra luggage. Also, make sure they have a safe place to store passport, travel tickets, insurance documents, and money
- » After they have unpacked, give them a tour of your house, show where to find things, and explain how to operate appliances. Don't assume they know how to operate everyday items; anything from light switches to shower taps can be unfamiliar!
- » Sometimes exchangees do not want to give the impression they do not understand or their language prevents them communicating their questions.

Please be sure to explain things that may seem quite obvious.

THINGS YOU CAN DO IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS

- » Keep your youth member busy, but also allow some time alone. Remember, they will be jetlagged and possibly experiencing culture shock.
- » Make sure they are familiar with your neighbourhood. They may want to go for a walk and could get lost because they are unfamiliar with the pattern of our streets.
- » Take the time to learn the correct pronunciation of their name.
- » Introduce them to family, friends. Write down names to help him/her remember.
- » Make sure your they have an ID card with your name, address and telephone number on it, and tell them to carry it at all times. Alternatively, put all these details into their phone for them.
- » Visit some local points of interest.
- » Establish a pattern of daily conversation. Have your youth member help make a list of conversation topics to get through the first few weeks.
- » Relax and make them feel comfortable

Common Problems

COMMON PROBLEMS

Many problems begin with a misunderstanding. These are best avoided by being open and discussing the expectations and household rules from the start.

You will identify straight away your youth member's language proficiency. It is important they understand your rules and expectations from the beginning so be patient and speak slowly and clearly. They should not feel embarrassed by the lack of language proficiency no matter how frustrated they may feeling communicating in an unfamiliar language.

Curfews – be sure to set the same rules with them that your children have

Damage – check with your insurance company as there may be policy implications for visitors to your house and damage they may cause. Any damage caused to valuables in your home or to the house itself should be brought to the attention of the your Branch Coordinator SISEP

Drinking – Make sure they are fully aware that the legal drinking age in Australia is 18 and drinking any type of alcohol will not be permitted

Drugs – you should be aware of all prescribed medication the youth member may be required to take. It should also be discussed that no illegal drugs will be permitted. Tattooing and body piercing are not allowed whilst the student is on exchange

Food – for some youth members, the change in food may initially be a problem – but probably one of taste only. It is expected that the youth member will have the same meals as you and the rest of the family. Some youth members may have special dietary requirements. This will have been identified on their application form and they should have been made known to you before they arrive

Getting Lost – Host families should consider providing the youth member with a map, explain the public transport system and put all the family emergency contact mobile numbers into their phone for them

Homesickness – most youth members will feel homesick at some stage and it is your job as host families to help them through these periods. Homesickness can occur at any time and may be triggered by events such as family birthdays or receiving emails from friends at home

Common Problems

Host family relationships – jealousy between hosted students and other children in the family can be a problem in home stays. The jealousy is likely to come from your own children who may see that they are being ignored whilst the hosted student receives all the attention. Any decision taken to act as a host family should involve your children in the discussion.

Keys – as the student is a member of your family, the rules on the house key should apply to them as it does to your own children

Money – apart from providing food, lodging and some transport, host families are not expected to suffer any financial burden whilst hosting a student. Any additional funds the student may need must be from their parents. Host students should not borrow money from host families

Telephone and Internet use – it is best to establish the ground rules for the use of the telephone and the internet from the outset. Students can spend too much time on the internet!

Additional Information

CHILD PROTECTION

Scouts Australia has a Child Protection Policy available on our website <https://scouts.com.au/> If you suspect your youth member is experiencing any kind of abuse i.e. physical, emotional, sexual or grooming, it is the host family's responsibility to report this immediately to the CEO of your Branch.

DEPARTURE

Please accompany your youth member to the airport. Before departure, you should check that they have their travel documents. In most cases, you will need to confirm reservations before departure.

Your Branch Coordinator SISEP (or their representative) will also be at the airport to farewell the youth member.

FEEDBACK

You are encouraged to give the Branch Coordinator SISEP your evaluation of the program: its successes, problems, and your suggestions for other host families.

If your experience has been positive, we hope you will tell other interested families about the program.

An electronic version of this feedback form will be emailed to you (an example on next page).

Please complete and email back to your Branch Coordinator SISEP.

Contact Details

CONTACT DETAILS

National Coordinator SISEP	int.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP ACT	act.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP NSW	nsw.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP QLD	sisep@scoutsqld.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP SA	sa.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP TAS	tas.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP VIC	vic.sisep@scouts.com.au
Branch Coordinator SISEP WA	wa.sisep@scouts.com.au
International Commissioner	int.comm@scouts.com.au
International Support	int.support@scouts.com.au

Host Family Feedback



HOST FAMILY FEEDBACK

We would welcome your comments on your youth members stay with you. This will enable us to maintain high standards and undertake any improvements to make the service we provide, the best that it can be.

Details of Family

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Details of Youth Member

Name _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Appreciation

What sort of qualities did you appreciate that your youth member displayed whilst in your home? Were they courteous, did they show respect for your home, your house rules, abide by curfews, were they punctual etc?

Other Information

Would you like to host again? Yes / No (please circle)

If no, please provide a reason:

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback!

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ'S

What is the role of the host family?

The host family would be required to open their hearts and welcome international youth members into their home. It is more than just providing all the basic needs such as their own room, providing their meals, space to study, do their laundry, access to other household facilities and to provide the occasional transport if stated. The Host family will need to be supportive and offer guidance where possible to help the youth member adjust to their new surroundings. It is a rich and rewarding experience for youth members and families, a way of meeting new people and forming new friendship and learning about each other's culture and lifestyle.

What should I do if I am having problems with the youth member?

The most important thing in the first instance is to communicate with the youth member and see if you can resolve the problems. If the problem continues, contact your SISEP coordinator and they will assist in mediation between both parties, or if necessary involve the overseas coordinator.

Are youth members expected to assist with chores around the house?

All members of the family in Australia share the responsibility of making sure the household runs smoothly. Your youth member is expected to live as a part of the family and is therefore also

expected to help with chores around the house. This usually consists of them keeping their own room clean, as well as tidying up after themselves in the common areas. You can also ask them to help clear the table, wash the dishes or other light chores. This is expected of youth members from all backgrounds.

If I take my youth member out do I have to pay for them?

If you want to take your youth member out, explain where you are going and how much it will cost for example activities that charge admission fee such as entry to theme parks, movie tickets, etc. Your youth member then has the opportunity to decide whether or not to go with you. Then again it is your decision if you want to treat them on special occasions.

However, please note that, if you are going out to dinner, and paying for your children, it would be nice to also pay for your exchange student.

Is it okay for me to go in to my youth member's room when they are not there?

Privacy is important. Their room should be private to them during their stay with you. If you plan to clean the room, then please let them know when you will do this. Perhaps even ask them to do a quick tidy up before you go in to clean and vacuum the room.



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