

one community

Ontario's Wellbeing Guidelines
For International Students Attending K-12 School





*Published by the
Ontario Association of School Districts International
info@oasdi.ca*

© June 2019

*NO PART OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT THE WRITTEN
APPROVAL OF THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS INTERNATIONAL*

Table of Contents

6	Background
7	International Student's Ontario Experience
8	Introduction
10	Who Should Utilize These Guidelines?
11	A. School District Student & Learning Services
12	School Districts - International Student Program Responsibilities
14	B. Schools Hosting International Students
16	C. Custodianship
20	D. Homestay Accommodations
30	E. K-12 International Students
32	F. Parents/Guardians of International Students
35	G. International Student Agency/Recruiters
36	Glossary & Definitions
40	Acknowledgments



Background...

Ontario's Strategy for International Education K-12 was released by the MOE in 2015. This innovative and progressive document is recognized as a vision and framework that shares a compelling argument that a comprehensive 21st Century education in Ontario schools includes internationalization as a critical component.

The MOE document includes four goals related to:

1. Future Oriented Learning for Ontario Students
2. High Quality Programing and Services for K-12 International Students Studying in Ontario
3. Opportunities for Sharing and Developing Ontario Education Expertise
4. Pathways to Post-secondary Education, Work and Living in Ontario.



International Student's Ontario Experience



HOME

- 👤 Custodian
- 👤 Homestay Provider
- 👤 Homestay Family



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

- 👤 Personal Responsibility
- 👤 Social Network
- 👤 Academic Network
- 👤 Self Advocacy



PARTNERS

- 👤 Insurance Provider
- 👤 Agent
- 👤 Canadian Government
- 👤 Parents



SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 👤 District Infrastructure
- 👤 Policy
- 👤 School
- 👤 Hosting Service
- 👤 Ministry Of Education



Introduction...

The purpose of this resource document is to provide consistency, best practice and related guidelines for all stakeholders with various roles and responsibilities in supporting international students' wellbeing while they are being educated and living in Ontario.

These guidelines are based on years of experience within Ontario school districts and a comprehensive review of best practice and consultation both within Ontario and across Canada. The resource document was developed by the Ontario Association of School Districts International (OASDI) in cooperation, and with the support of, the Ontario Ministry of Education. They align with the standards promoted by the Canadian Association of Public Schools- International (CAPS-I) and with the British Columbia MOE resource document released in 2015 – *K-12 International Student Homestay Guidelines*.

This document applies to all the unique international education programs offered by various Ontario school districts, including long term academic immersion experiences (at least one semester or 5 months) and short term experiences, such as - immersion, cultural, ESL, and specialized programming (less than 5 months).

Federal, provincial and municipal legislation and laws apply to all international students and service providers. It is the responsibility of each stakeholder group identified in this document to be familiar with applicable laws and to seek legal advice within their jurisdiction as required.



These guidelines recognized that a positive and productive international student experience requires a holistic and coordinated approach, an approach that addresses and considers all dimensions of the international learner wellbeing – cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. *MOE Ontario's Wellbeing Strategy for Education, May 2016.*

The approach requires the commitment and collaboration of all – international students, their parents, schools, custodians, homestay accommodation providers and international agents/recruiters.

These guidelines also recognize that each Ontario school district and community has the autonomy to ensure that these guidelines are considered within their own unique international student program delivery model and policies. Ontario school districts offer various education experiences based on their vision and capacity, and the demand and interest from international markets. Communities-at-large also have different capacities in offering homestay accommodations and support services. School districts in urban, suburban, and rural environment all offer a unique delivery model.

An important consideration is the authority of international students' parents to make the best decisions for their children, considering the guidance and recommendations of school district experts and their agents.





Who Should Utilize These Guidelines?...

- A. School District International Program Coordinators
School District Student & Learning Services
- B. Schools Hosting International Students
- C. Custodians
- D. Homestay Accommodation
 - a. Providers
 - b. Host Families
- E. K-12 International Students
- F. International Students Parents/Guardians
- G. International Students Agents/Recruiters



A. School District Student & Learning Services

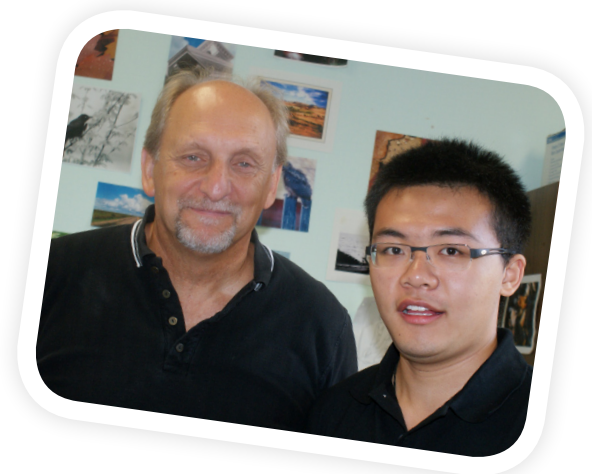
General Requirements...

School Districts Should:

1. Ensure that their student services for international students are comprehensively addressed within the district's related wellbeing policies.
2. Integrate international students into the general student body and support accordingly whenever possible.

It is reasonable that international student may have restrictions on limited school district student services funded by Ontario taxpayers and not covered by international student tuition. However, school districts should communicate in advance of application these student service limitations through their website and through agent/recruiter training.

3. School districts should ensure that international students have the appropriate ESL programing and program support to ensure language acquisition within a reasonable time period and through reasonable performance expectations.
4. Ensure that new international students have a comprehensive orientation and ongoing support for all aspects of their Canadian education and life experience. This orientation can be offered by the school district, schools and education partners, such as homestay program providers.





School Districts - International Student Program Responsibilities...

School Districts Should:

1. Verify the identify of the custodian, appointed by the parent/guardian, who is responsible for the care of each international student. The international student program should articulate its policies and expectations of a custodian.
2. Develop clear procedures for the custodian, parent/guardian and host family parents to connect with their international student's school.

For example, Host family involvement with ELL/ESL or with French language learning/French as a second language support, attendance, and extra-curricular activities will promote "school connectedness" and support student learning and success.

3. Develop procedures and templates for communicating with the parent/guardian and custodian.
4. Support host families with conflict resolution procedures and processes to resolve the variety of issues that may arise during the homestay. A clear outline of when and who they should contact when additional support is required is highly recommended.
5. Encourage homestay families to be specific and thoughtful regarding their Code of Conduct. Considerations such as curfew, internet use, chores, etc. should be clearly outlined and communicated to the student. Ensuring that all responsibilities are developmentally appropriate and suitable within the context of the home experience is important.



6. Provide host families with a variety of resources to support their international student in acquiring English or French as an additional language.
7. Publish the international student program's legal limitations.
8. Develop a participation agreement with the student, custodian, parent/guardian and homestay provider that includes:
 - expectations of student behaviour,
 - conflict resolution processes and
 - grounds for dismissal from homestay and/or the school district program.
9. Communicate with Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC formerly CIC) should the status of the student with the education sector and Canada change.
10. Ensure that emergency medical and mental health support and procedures are in place for the students, with clear expectations of the custodian and/or host families, documented and communicated.





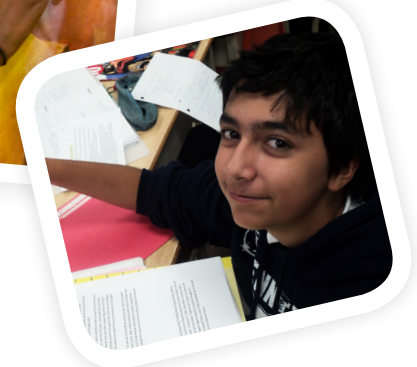
B. Schools Hosting International Students...

Schools Should:

1. Schools should create a welcoming and inclusive environment for international students in alignment with the school's values, beliefs and mission. Their unique education, cultural background and needs should be recognized and celebrated when possible.
2. Have equitable access to staff, programs, courses, extra-curricular activities and support to ensure they have the opportunity to achieve their objectives and goals.
3. Ensure that international students have equitable and appropriate access to all available support services to support all dimensions of the student – academic, social, psychological and physical. The unique educational and cultural background of international students must be considered.
4. Provide ongoing support for international students with time management, goal setting and the development of a work-leisure balance. Students often come from backgrounds where their education and home experiences are very constructed and monitored. When arriving in Canada, they may not be accustomed to the freedom and relatively unstructured lifestyle.
5. School districts must ensure that their student services for international students are comprehensively addressed within the district's related wellbeing policies.



6. International students should be integrated into the general student body and supported accordingly whenever possible. It is reasonable that international student may have restrictions on limited school district student services funded by Ontario taxpayers and not covered by international student tuition. However, school districts should communicate in advance of application these student service limitations through their website and through agent/recruiter training.
7. School districts should ensure that international students have the appropriate ESL programing and program support to ensure language acquisition within a reasonable time period and through reasonable performance expectations.
8. School districts should also ensure that new international students have a comprehensive orientation and ongoing support for all aspects of their Canadian education and life experience. This orientation can be offered by the school district, schools and education partners, such as homestay program providers.





C. Custodianship...

The custodian plays a critical role in the ongoing wellbeing and safety of an international student in Canada. International students' parents/guardians assign this responsibility to a responsible adult through notarized documentation.

This document requirement begins when students are applying to Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada for their study visa. (Refer to <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit.html> for specific requirements.)

School districts utilize and accept various models of custodianship based on their district's policies:

- Some school districts are not involved in this responsibility and expect the parents of international students to make their own arrangements
- Some school districts make a list of local service providers available
- Still other school districts establish a model where an available option is that the homestay provider (company) or the homestay host takes on this responsibility
- A number of Ontario school districts offer the option where the district itself takes on this responsibility.

Regardless of the strategy, a school district must be an active partner in the supervision of the student and set clear expectations to ensure the overall safety and wellbeing of the student.



Ongoing communication, in the best interest, of the student should be a fundamental operating principle.

According to Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada, custodians must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident
- Be at least 25 years of age
- Live within the same geographic region as the school district hosting the international student (IRCC requires the custodian to live within a “reasonable distance” to the student. IRCC does not define “reasonable”, therefore, the school district should set boundaries based on their geography.)
- Be able to speak English at an adequate level to ensure they are able to communication with stakeholders and services as required by their role.

In all cases, the international student’s parents make the final decision as long as the custodian follows Canadian and Ontario laws, and meets Immigration, Refugee & Citizenship Canada and the school district’s criteria.

Note: A policy and procedure should be documented between custodians and homestay providers that outlines signing authority for various applications in an international student’s life, e.g. school excursions, dispensing of medications.



Note: The term “guardian” is assigned by the courts, while the term “custodian” is assigned, through a legal process, by student’s parents. This interpretation is consistent with Immigration, Refugee & Citizenship Canada.

The term “**Legal Guardian**” is based on family law, and is a defined term used by the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. ([https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt.](https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/)) Legal Guardians are appointed by the courts in cases where a child’s parents are no longer able to act as their Legal Guardian. International student’s guardians are always their parents.

The term “Custodianship” is based on Immigration law and is defined by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (“IRPA”). It is further explained in the policy Manual “Temporary Residents: Students”. The custodian is appointed by the parents through the IRCC’s IMM5646 form, which must be completed and notarized.

The governing legislation, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (“IRPA”) does not provide a definition of a “Custodian” nor does it provide detailed information about the obligations of a Custodian besides making ‘adequate arrangements for the care and support of the student’ and agreeing to reside ‘within a reasonable distance’ of the minor child’s intended residence and school.



The problem with this term is that it is a Canadian immigration definition, not grounded in family law. This creates a major knowledge gap in what the custodian can and can not do, and the minor children and their parent's ability to intercept. Consequently, a school district must establish and clarify expectations, by providing terms and conditions related to international students.





D. Homestay Accommodations...

The Province of Ontario and Ontario school districts' international student programs are proud of Ontario's world class education and our welcoming communities. Our communities offer urban, suburban and rural experiences.

Recognizing that homestay plays a pivotal role in an international student's experience, Ontario is committed to high-quality homestay accommodation experiences for all students.

School districts across Ontario utilize three different administrative models:

1. Some school districts are not involved in this responsibility and expect the parents of international students to make their own arrangements. A listing of homestay providers and contact information may or may not be provided.
2. Some school districts establish formal agreements with homestay provider companies. School districts maintain a high level of cooperation and accountability with these companies. Parents are referred to these providers and encouraged to consider all these options
3. Some Ontario school districts offer the option where the district itself is prepared to take on this responsibility.

Homestay accommodations take various forms:



- A formal arrangement by an international student program, or its delegates, to house an international student with an approved family during the course of study. This family and its residence are both commonly referred to as the 'homestay'. The family is often referred to as the host family. A K-12 homestay student from outside Ontario pays a fee to stay with a homestay family in return for meals, a private room, family support, and various cultural experiences.
- There are also homestay service providers, such as private companies or websites, which might not have a relationship with a K-12 school district. Some parents and/or international students may be considering working with such a homestay program provider or, alternatively, placing the student with a relative or family friend.

Note: Parents and international students considering these options may want to consult with the school district international student program before finalizing their decision. The international student program may have policies or information directly relating to these situations.

School districts should:

- Establish a comprehensive policy to ensure parents have guidance in this important service decision
- Communicate the policy and establish an ongoing approved list of provider options
- Expect regular communication between Homestay Program Providers, host families, schools and parents to ensure that all aspects of the international student's life in Canada are coordinated



Homestay Program Provider Responsibilities...

To promote the best possible homestay experience for international K-12 students, homestay program providers should:

1. Implement and maintain a homestay screening process for host families. This screening process should be published and should include:
 - a. Scheduled home inspections and host parent interviews;
 - b. Annual vulnerable sector criminal records check for all adult household members; and
 - c. Reference checks for the host family parent(s) where required.

Note: This screening process is separate from the IRCC screening process related to issuing a study visa or a school district's screening of applicants for enrollment.

2. Establish a matching process for homestays and international students to determine suitability
3. Establish a profile of each student and gather appropriate and up-to-date personal records/ contact information for the student, parent/guardian, custodian and/or host family, including:
 - a. Legal first and last names
(i.e. as they appear in a passport);
 - b. Gender;



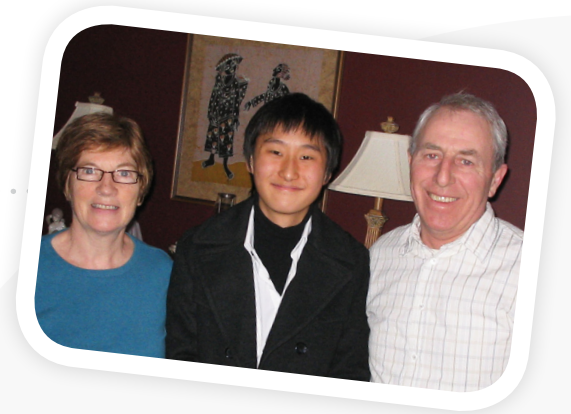
- c. Age;
 - d. Picture;
 - e. Relevant medical information;
 - f. Country of Residence and address;
 - g. Contact telephone number and email address.
4. Ensure that all data collected and any information distributed by the homestay program provider complies with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada) and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy, Ontario Act (FIPPA).
 5. Develop and deliver a comprehensive training program for new host families to ensure familiarity and understanding with best practices and develop an ongoing process for regular host families to stay current with best practices.
 6. Place no more than two long term international students and from different cultures, with a host family at the same time.
 7. Avoid concurrently placing both adult and minor international students in the same home.
 8. Inform the host family of potential student placements by using a standardized student profile form that includes the dates of accommodation, special requirements, and relevant medical and behavioral background information.
 9. Liaise with the student, school, host family and parents/guardian and provide each with support as outlined in individual school district policy.



10. Communicate with international students and host families on a regular basis.
11. Implement and maintain quality assurance and program evaluation mechanisms.
12. Offer conflict resolution strategies and services to both the host family and the international student
13. Maintain and communicate clear, standards and procedures relating to homestay, including procedures for the dismissal of host families in warranted cases and procedures for transferring students to a different host family.
14. Develop separate reference resources for host families and for international students (and their parents) that describe relevant legislation, standards and procedures. Manuals should contain standards and procedures applicable to the full range of a host family's and an international student's homestay experience.
15. Maintain clear, published fee information including:
 - a. Terms of Agreement – payment of fees to whom and when;
 - b. Per diem and monthly homestay fees;
 - c. Service included with fees;



- d. Additional fees (E.g. airport pick-up or drop-off or storage fees); and
 - e. Refund policy.
16. Provide, as appropriate, the international student with access to a person who can speak in the student's primary language.
 17. Share medical or mental health concerns that arise during the course of the homestay with the international student program, the host family, the custodian or the student's parent/guardian(s) as appropriate in accordance with applicable privacy laws. Ensure that expectations for support and follow up and who to contact in case of emergency for consultation and coverage are documented and communicated. International students are informed that caretakers and parents will be notified if they are at risk of self or others.
 18. Recognizing the unique needs of younger international students residing in a homestay, provide additional standards and procedural support and requirements as appropriate.
 19. Publish the homestay program provider's legal limitations.
 20. Inform international students who are about to be placed with a host family about the Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 which operates twenty-four hours a day, year- round, and may be called in cases where the international student feels he/she is being mistreated or unsafe in the home or at school (regional child & youth mental health services are also available in most districts).



Homestay Host Families...

The role of the homestay host is critical to an international student's successful experience and wellbeing in Canada. The homestay host should make an effort to be the student's "second family", realizing that the student is often away from their family, culture and home country for the first time.

The host family should:

- Create a welcoming and inclusive home environment
- Be aware of the unique cultural background of the international student and help the student adapt to Canadian culture and lifestyle
- Ensure that the student has a private bedroom and reasonable internet access
- Offer the student a full meal plan appropriate to the student's dietary needs, considering their traditional menu and transition to a Canadian diet
- Support the student in developing the necessary life skills to participate in the family's home life and to adjust to Canadian life
- Engage the student in the family's life and expose the student to a Canadian cultural experiences when possible
- Communicate with the international student's service providers on a regular basis including the custodian and the school or school district



- Ensure that they are hosting no more than two international students in a home at the same time and that these students are not from the same language group unless requested by parents.

Homestay Host Families Responsibilities...

To promote the best possible experience for international K-12 students, host family parent(s) should:

1. Provide a caring, nurturing and supportive environment for international students
2. Be 25 years of age
3. Agree to schedule in-home inspections by either the international student program or the homestay provider, or both, and annual criminal record checks (for anyone living in the home who is 18 years of age)
4. Have no more than two long term international students living in the homestay at the same time
5. Avoid concurrently hosting both adult and minor international students
6. Provide food for three nutritious meals per day or in accordance with the meal plan expectations for the program



7. Provide a clean and tidy home with a private, adequately furnished bedroom, with access to:
 - a. A desk, chair and adequate lighting for homework
 - b. A bathroom, linens and use of laundry facilities
 - c. Entry into the home like any other member of the family, e.g. house key and alarm code, if applicable
 - d. Where possible, access to the internet to support education goals and consistent communication with home
8. Ensure the house is safe and complies with the Ontario Building Code and local building bylaws, as applicable, and with the local fire code (<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/page41.aspx>)
9. Ensure a student's general well-being, seek medical attention when necessary, and report any significant medical or mental health issues to the school, the custodian, the homestay program provider and the international student program. In consultation with the custodian, support the student in any emergent medical or mental health situation, e.g. be present at hospital, follow up with physician and/or counselling or any other recommendations.
10. Inform the school or international student program if the student drinks alcohol, takes or possesses non-prescribed, illegal drugs or breaks the law.





11. Ensure the home and auto insurance policy adequately covers students residing within their home; some policies do not cover homestay students.
12. Promote strong connections between an international student and their parents, schools and communities by:
 - a. Using the student's desired language of study (English or French) in the home
 - b. Imposing reasonable limits on the student's personal use of the internet (i.e. number of hours/day and appropriate times of day)
 - c. Negotiating and enforcing an appropriate and reasonable curfew and house rules for the student
 - d. Assisting the student in seeking extra-curricular activities and sports
 - e. Attending school or district orientation for host families and other cultural or educational events.





E. K-12 International Students...

International students are often challenged by the first years in Canada, adjusting to immersion in a new culture, a new education system, a new family, new social norms and a new community. The most significant contributors to an international student's success in Canada are the student's positive attitude, their effort, and their commitment to maximize the opportunities offered to them.

International Student Responsibilities...

International students coming to Ontario and entering a homestay should:

1. Engage with the host family and the school and seek out opportunities to become involved in the school and family life
2. Communicate regularly with their parent/guardian, custodians and host family
3. Communicate significant issues or concerns to the host family, parent/guardian, custodian, school principal, vice-principal or teachers, homestay program provider or international school program as appropriate
4. Understand that the school district international student program may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where accommodation that has been arranged privately is deemed to be unsafe or unsuitable



5. Respect and be responsible toward the home and property and pay for any damage to family property if found to be responsible for the damage
6. Understand that there is a Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 which operates twenty-four hours a day, year-round, and may be called in cases where the international student feels he/she is being mistreated or unsafe in the home or at school (regional child & youth mental health services are also available in most districts).





F. Parents/Guardians of International Students...

Parents/guardians of international students have given a significant responsibility for their children to the school district, custodians, homestay providers, and homestay families.

International Student Parents/Guardians should:

- Within the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, ensure that during the application process, school districts have access to authentic and accurate data to ensure that the district can make informed decision on the application under consideration, on whether they have the capacity to accept the student, and once accepted, to ensure they have the support and resources required to service the student.
- Maintain ongoing communication and participate in open dialogue as active partners in their children's education and general wellbeing in Canada.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities...

An international student's parent/guardian should:

1. Accurately complete the application and intake materials and disclose all of the student's relevant information, such as medical conditions, to the school district, custodian, homestay program provider and the host family so that they are fully able to support and care for the student for the duration of their education and life experience in Canada



2. Stay in regular communication with the student to monitor that the student is coping well with the pressures and stresses that come with living and studying in a new country and learning a new language. Frequency should be limited to ensure that the student develops confidence and independence
3. Ensure that their child has a sufficient supply of any required medications and that they are clearly labeled in English
4. Report significant concerns to the custodian and/or homestay program provider
5. Understand that the school district international student program, in consultation with the custodian, may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where accommodation that has been arranged privately is deemed to be unsafe or unsuitable
6. Understand that there is a Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868, which operates twenty-four hours a day, year round, and may be called in cases where the international student feels he/she is being mistreated or unsafe in the home or at school (regional child & youth mental health services are also available in most districts)
7. Inform the custodian and home stay provider, with advanced notice, of any visits to their child and related plans when in Canada



8. In exceptional circumstances and on request, attend to their child in person in Canada, e.g. *medical emergencies, legal emergencies, expulsion from homestay program.*

Note: Your child may come from a cultural background where her/his education and home experiences are very structured and monitored. When arriving in Canada, he/she may not be accustomed to the freedom and relatively unstructured lifestyle. Your child will benefit immensely from recognizing the need and requesting support in school and in the homestay with time management, goalsetting and the development of a work-leisure balance. Your encouragement and support in this regard will help your child be successful in this cultural change and maturing process.



G. International Student Agency/Recruiters...

International students and their families, and school districts, sometimes hire agents or recruiters to help place the student in an international student program.

International Student Agency/Recruiters Responsibilities...

International student agents should:

1. Provide guidance and accurate information to international students and their parents/guardians to support a successful and positive holistic experience for international students in Canada
2. Provide support to international student programs, custodians, homestay program providers, and international students and their families, particularly in regard to communicating with the parent/guardian if and when requested by the custodian, homestay program provider or the international student program
3. Be familiar with the Ontario K-12 International Student Wellbeing Guidelines and the best practices expectations of the homestay sector in Ontario
4. Help students to understand and abide by all rules/guidelines established by the custodian, school district, and the homestay program provider when staying with a host family arranged by that provider
5. Abide by the ethical standard established by the Government of Ontario, Ontario school districts and homestay providers, always recognizing the best interest of the international student.



Glossary & Definitions...

For the Purposes of these Guidelines:

Custodian - The term “Custodianship” is based on Immigration law and is defined by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (“IRPA”). It is further explained in the policy Manual “Temporary Residents: Students”. The custodian is appointed by the parents through the IRCC’s IMM5646 form, which must be completed and notarized.

The governing legislation, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (“IRPA”) does not provide a definition of a “Custodian” nor does it provide detailed information about the obligations of a Custodian besides making ‘adequate arrangements for the care and support of the student’ and agreeing to reside ‘within a reasonable distance’ of the minor child’s intended residence and school.

International student programs and the Canadian federal government require that international students who are minor children have a custodian while studying in the Province of Ontario. Some Ontario school districts require that any international student, regardless of age, has the guidance and support of an appointed custodian while enrolled in one of their schools.

Code of Conduct - is a set of written rules on how to behave and interact with other people. Under the Ontario Provincial Code of Conduct and School District Codes of Conduct, boards of education must establish one or more codes of conduct for the schools within their jurisdiction and ensure that schools implement the codes.



Homestay Service - is a formal arrangement by an international student program, or its delegates, or an international student's parents, or its delegates, to house an international student with an approved family during their course of study. This family and its residence are both commonly referred to as the 'homestay'. For the purpose of this document, the family and the residence have separate terms, as described below.

Homestay Participation Agreement – a contract between home stay service, custodian, homestay and student outlining the expectations of each party.

Homestay Program Provider - is the entity that places students with a host family. Depending on the circumstances, the homestay program provider could be a school district, a company or organization contracted by the international student program, or a business or individual that is not in a relationship with the international student program.

Host – is an individual with the Host Family.

Host Family - is the family with which an international student resides during the course of their studies in Canada.

International Student or Learner - refers to students from outside Canada who do not meet the Ministry of Education's funding eligibility requirements and/or have to obtain the authorization of the Canadian Government to enter Canada with the intention of pursuing studies longer than six months.



International Student Program - is an administrative unit within a school district. The international student program administers, facilitates or arranges for the education, accommodation and wellbeing and care of international students.

Legal Guardian - A child who is under the age of 18 years is called a minor. In Ontario, a parent is automatically the “guardian of the person” of his or her minor child. An individual can be appointed as the guardian by the court. (www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/ocl/propguard.php)

Minor Child - refers to any person below the age of 19 years in Ontario. Minor children require supervision by either a Legal Guardian or Custodian.

Parent - refers to the biological or adoptive parent of a child or his/her Legal Guardian, as appointed by the court in the child’s home country.

Private and/or Independently Arranged Accommodation - is accommodation that has been arranged for an international student that is not provided by a school or school district approved homestay program provider.

Residence/Boarding - refers to accommodation where two or more minor students live together, typically on the school property and administered by an Ontario independent school. Residence/Boarding situations are not covered by these Guidelines.



School Connectedness - is a term used by educators to describe the level of connection that a student feels for their school. Research shows that a strong feeling of connection to a school and to the adults in that school leads to stronger school performance.

Well-being - is a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. It is supported through equity and respect for our diverse identities and strengths. Well-being in early years and school settings is about helping children and students become resilient, so that they can make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement both now and in the future.

The Four Domains of Well-Being

- Cognitive: The development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the ability to be flexible and innovative.
- Emotional: This involves learning about experiencing emotions, and understanding how to recognize, manage and cope with them.
- Social: The development of self-awareness, including the sense of belonging, collaboration, relationships with others, and communication skills.
- Physical: The development of the body, impacted by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating, and healthy life choices.



Acknowledgements...

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller

This document was developed after a thorough review of international student wellbeing best practice across Canada, with an emphasis on homestay accommodation and care. The following organizations and individuals are acknowledged and thanked for their contributions.

Lead Writer

Victor Degutis, COO, International Education,
Waterloo Catholic DSB & Past-president, OASDI

British Colombia Ministry of Education

- Dwayne Cover, A/Director, International Education & Independent Schools

Canadian Homestay Network

- Jennifer Wilson, Managing Director



Ontario Association of School Districts International (OASDI)

- Geoff Best, International Education Executive Director, Ottawa-Carlton DSB
- Matthew Raby, International Education Program Director, Upper Canada DSB
- Rosy Tersigni, International Education Program Coordinator, York DSB
- Fred Wilson, International Education Supervisor, Niagara Catholic DSB
- Dr. Smita Sengupta, International Education Senior Manager, Toronto DSB
- Vicki Houston, Superintendent, Greater Essex County DSB
- Ian Platt, International Student Program Coordinator, Simcoe DSB
- Jean-Pierre Michaud, Principal, International Education, Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- Doug Morrell, Superintendent, Upper Grand DSB

Waterloo Region Student Placement

- Ev Widarski, Owner

Waterloo Catholic District School Board

- Margo Jones, Manager, International Education
- Jessica Morales, Coordinator, International Education
- Taylor Piellusch, Administrative Assistant, International Education
- Amanda Warne, WCSDB Mental Health Lead
- Rod Miller, WCDSB Chief Social Worker



**Ontario Association of
School Districts International**
Association Ontarienne des
Conseils Scolaires - International

OASDI.CA