



JAMES HARGEST COLLEGE **KEEP FAITH**



**HANDBOOK for HOST FAMILIES
2026**

Reviewed November 2025



Thank you for your willingness to host an overseas student. The school is aware of the commitment you are making and we will support you in every possible way.

James Hargest College is a signatory to “the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students”. This is a document which outlines everything we must do to ensure our students are safe and well looked after during their time in New Zealand. International students add to the cultural diversity of our school and help promote cultural awareness and understanding.

Why do students from another country want to study here?

Many students come to New Zealand to gain qualifications that are not easily accessible in their own country. Gaining qualifications in an English speaking country will also greatly increase the future employment opportunities for these students.

Students also come to New Zealand to gain from the cultural experience of living and studying in a country other than their own. Attending secondary school is seen as an important stepping stone in this process. Many students continue their studies at New Zealand tertiary institutions or move to another English speaking country such as Australia or the United States of America to attend university.

New Zealand is an increasingly popular destination for study abroad. We have a reputation for being “clean and green” with a relatively safe environment and a well regarded standard of education.

Our European students often only come for six months or a year and, apart from upgrading their English skills, they also come to experience Outdoor Education Programmes which many schools offer.

The students are expected to take part in family life. They are encouraged to join in with family activities and to help around the house. However, it is important to be aware of the challenges they will face, particularly homesickness and culture shock.

Culture Shock: This is a normal and natural reaction when someone is required to function in a society that is markedly different from the one with which they are familiar. Changes in language, study, food, home life and climate all combine to require a major level of adjustment. There is a fairly predictable cycle of adjustment, and it is important you should be aware of it. Each student is different and may not experience all of the stages in the same order.

1. “Everything is wonderful” stage. On arrival everything is new, exciting and interesting.
2. “Everything is awful” stage. Students become accustomed to their new life and may start criticising things that only weeks ago were “great”.
3. “Everything is O.K.” Things aren't so bad after all and the trend begins to reverse. Suddenly situations are not so depressing and students find things interesting again.
4. The final stage is achieved when students feel “at home” in our society. This may never happen for some students, but many do achieve this level.



FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Someone new coming into any home alters the dynamics of the family. Each member of your family will have to adjust to the student and for some this may take considerable effort and thought.

If you have young children, you may find they feel “left out” in the early days when your student will require a lot of your attention. You may need to explain to your children how difficult it is for someone coming to a new country with new people to meet and new customs to learn.

Some families with young children find the student and the children “bond” very quickly. While students love the children, they sometimes find it difficult to ask the children to leave them alone for study or time out. You may need to observe carefully and have a quiet word with your children if you think this is needed.

In some Asian countries, males are held in higher regard than females. This is largely due to the fact that the roles of men and women differ to a greater extent than in New Zealand. You may find you need to explain to your male student that in this country men and women need to be given equal respect and consideration.

COMMUNICATING IDEAS AND FEELINGS

In many parts of Asia, politeness requires acceptance without questioning. People will avoid making any kind of objection or request, particularly to anyone who is their senior.

Please encourage your student to say what they think and feel and to ask questions. Explain that you will not think badly of them if they question something. This will help them to improve their English as well as help them with the New Zealand way of thinking – and, of course, will help develop mutual understanding

RELIGION

Religion is personal and it goes without saying that you should respect your student’s religious beliefs, just as the student will respect yours.

It is a good idea to look through the student’s handbook with them and discuss any questions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

1. The students should be active family members. Please ensure that your daily routines are clearly understood e.g. expect them to keep their own rooms tidy, explain where they should put their dirty laundry, etc.
2. The students need to keep you informed of where they are and what time they will return. You, of course, have the right to set curfew times and expect them to be observed. We encourage the development of sound study habits particularly during the school week. For this reason, it may be necessary to restrict midweek social activities.
3. Students must check with you before inviting friends' home. Guidelines may need to be set regarding times friends should leave.
4. If students wish to leave Invercargill (other than with their host family), or travel out of the southern region with their homestay, they must get prior approval from the Director of International Students at least two weeks prior to their departure. There is a **green** form to **complete in advance** they can be collected from outside the international office. Host parents are also asked to contact Kylie or Megan for any day or overnight trips (fishing, camping, tramping, boating, kayaking etc) any extreme sports skydiving, Bungy Jumping etc and temporary care of students to confirm that the arrangements are acceptable. Often permission also needs to be granted from the student's natural parents.
5. Students should all arrive with a cell phone. The school will provide them with a SIM card that is loaded with a small amount of credit. If they run out they are responsible for buying more. They may need your help to do this and help to load it on their phone. Students should have no reason to use your landline to make phone calls, however, if they do, please take note of the date and time as it will be their responsibility to pay for it, not yours or the schools.
Please ensure all of the numbers of key staff are entered in case of emergency.
6. Some overseas students are unfamiliar with New Zealand habits regarding personal hygiene. They may seem to spend unreasonable lengths of time in the bathroom and use considerable quantities of hot water. Please explain that while in your home they will need to be considerate of other family members.
7. Students are expected to be punctual for meals. Please ask them to tell you in advance if they are not going to be present for a meal.
8. The cost of electricity may not be understood by overseas students. They may need to be advised regarding the reasonable use of electrical appliances, particularly heaters.

9. As per New Zealand Law and the James Hargest Code of Conduct, students under the age of 18 **CANNOT** purchase, smoke or supply cigarettes, this includes e-cigarettes (vaping products) too.
10. As per New Zealand Law and the James Hargest Code of Conduct, students under the age of 18 **CANNOT** purchase, consume or supply any alcohol.
11. Students are responsible for purchasing their own school uniform and stationery requirements, but it would be appreciated if you could advise / support them in this.
12. Students should ask permission to access the internet and follow the household rules
13. **Senior Campus** students are responsible for their passport, air tickets and any other important documents and **MUST** ensure that they are kept in a safe place. **Junior Campus** student's passports, air tickets and other valuables will be kept at James Hargest College. A copy of each will be sent to you. Please remember to collect their passports etc before their departure from the Senior Campus safe.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST FAMILY

Student Care: Homestay families are responsible for all the school year, including the school holidays.

1. Students under the age of 14 must be appropriately supervised in accordance to the New Zealand law. The students need to keep you informed of where they are and what time they will return. We encourage the development of sound study habits particularly during the school week. For this reason, it may be necessary to restrict mid-week social activities.
2. It is the homestay carer's responsibility to know where the student is, and how they can be contacted. If a student wishes to stay at a friend's place overnight, you need to contact Kylie or Megan via email to make sure the arrangements are acceptable.
3. The host family **MUST** provide a physically and emotionally safe home.
 - First Aid kit
 - Working fire alarms
 - Locks on toilet & bathroom doors
4. We ask that you assist with the "settling in" process and provide guidance in matters such as opening bank accounts and purchasing school requirements.
5. Make sure homestay rules/routines are clear eg:
 - Using their cell phone and computer/internet
 - Issues about smoking and alcohol
 - Reasonable length of time in the shower
 - Use of heaters and electric blankets
 - Playing music late at night
 - Times you expect your student home at night and the latest time friends can visit
 - Toiletries. Students are expected to provide their own shampoo, toothpaste, etc
6. Students should be provided with a warm, well-appointed bedroom. Short term students and Junior Campus students will not require a desk in their room but will need a quiet space to study.
7. The host family will provide three meals a day. Talk to your student and ask them what they may like to eat for breakfast and lunch. Some cultures like rice and noodles with eggs for breakfast, although this is not an expectation there should be a variety of options available for breakfast and lunches.

Lunch examples:

 - 1 or 2 x Sandwiches or wraps or noodles or rice or pie or salad
 - 2 or 3 x snacks: potato chips, muesli bar, crackers, muffins or cookies
 - 1 or 2 x fruit
8. Laundry is the responsibility of the host family. Dry-cleaning is the exception.

9. **Transport to and from school is the responsibility of the host family.** If you live close to school, it is reasonable to expect the student to walk. Alternatively, you may choose to provide a bike. It would be appreciated if you would also help with transport to town, sports, etc. but of course the requests must be reasonable.
10. We ask host families to support the student with their learning in whatever ways they can. This may include assisting with homework, providing resources where possible and attending parent – teacher interviews. We want to work with you in the best interests of the student.
11. When medical issues arise, please support your student and see that they seek professional advice. This may be your own family GP. Generally, they can claim the fee from the insurance company. Please ask for a copy of the consultation notes and keep all receipts from the Doctors and prescriptions, bring them into school to Kylie.
12. If the student is absent from school (for any reason) please phone the attendance officer on the morning of the day of the absence. Bring any truancy (or suspected truancy) to the attention of the school immediately. **SENIOR CAMPUS:** 03 217 6129 EXT 205 **JUNIOR CAMPUS:** 03 2179250.
13. Contact the International Emergency number if any kind of emergency arises **03 928 5982**. Of course, any suspected physical/sexual/racial abuse incidents must be reported immediately in accordance with overall school policy.
14. We would ask you to support and encourage your student to play sports and become involved in cultural activities.
15. Inform us of any changes in the composition of your household, health, address or any criminal convictions.
16. It is the expectation that students will be provided with internet access. If there are any issues, please discuss with the school. We recommend it is turned off at 9.00pm on week nights for Junior Campus students and 10.00pm on week nights for Senior Campus Students.
17. Complete a homestay report twice a year. This may be edited and will become part of the formal school report.

Host families are not expected to:

- Pay for toll or mobile phone calls
- Cook special food unless previous arrangements have been made.
- Insure the student's goods or pay for property the student damages or loses
- Offer accommodation to visiting friends or relatives
- Comply with unreasonable requests

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Telephone:

Please ensure students do not have open access to the telephone for making international and cellphone calls. James Hargest College cannot accept liability for large toll accounts. Student's parents should provide an international calling card or arrange reverse charge calls.

Homestay Payments:

Homestay payments will be direct credited fortnightly in advance.

Retainer Fees at Holiday Times:

These will be negotiated on a case by case basis. In general, if students are away for more than 2 weeks, they will pay a retainer of 50% of the normal rate. (This will be paid from the third week onwards). Retainer fees do not apply during the Christmas holidays. All homestay payments are stopped over the Christmas holidays. However, if students stay over the summer holidays, families will be paid the usual fee.

Health/Travel Insurance:

All students must be covered by health/travel/general insurance. This is generally arranged through Studentsafe by James Hargest College. The Government does not cover any expenses for International Students. If your student becomes unwell and a visit to the doctor is necessary, then the student will need to pay for the visit. The school can help them apply for reimbursement from the insurance company.

Contents Household Insurance:

We suggest that you check your insurance policy cover to ensure that it will cover any breakages or damage that may be caused by an international student.

Driving:

International students **MUST NOT** own or drive a car. However, they may get a New Zealand Driver's Licence and undertake lessons from a registered driving instructor. Permission must be provided in writing to James Hargest College from their parents. Undertaking a defensive driving course may be requested.

Students **MUST NOT** travel in a vehicle with anyone other than their homestay carer unless the driver has been police vetted by James Hargest or they have permission from the International Director.

Guardianship

The Principal is the legal guardian of the student. Therefore, the school will be responsible for advising / supporting the student in any major decision making. Please contact the Director of International Students (Lara Buchanan) rather than taking on the full responsibility yourself.

Cultural differences:

It is quite common for some Asian cultures to drink warm water instead of cold. Please talk to your student and if this is the case show them where to fill their drink bottle from.

Termination of Arrangements:

Two weeks' notice must be given if either party wishes to terminate accommodation arrangements.

VALUES

The following section explains the standard of behaviour expected of James Hargest College students. We would appreciate your support in reinforcing these values. They will also be discussed as part of the school's orientation programme.

The Hargest Values are:

- We respect each other
- We treat all people fairly
- We are honest
- We work hard
- We are responsible for all we do
- We take care of our environment



UNIFORM

Girls' Uniform:

SKIRT	Hargest green A-line skirt
SHORTS	Regulation grey
TROUSERS	Regulation grey
SHIRT	White blouse with long sleeves, pointed collar and straight hem or white short sleeved polo shirt with Hargest collar stripes and pocket monogram
SOCKS	$\frac{3}{4}$ white below the knee socks or white sockettes
SHOES	Plain black leather, laced, flat, dress (NOT t-bar)
JERSEY	Cardinal red V-necked jersey with school monogram
VEST	Cardinal red V-necked with school monogram
KILT	Hargest kilt to be worn with mid brown tights or above the knee beaver brown socks and the long sleeve white shirt. May be worn throughout the year.
JACKET	JHC regulation black softshell jacket
BLAZER	School regulation blazer may be worn.

Boys' Uniform:

SHORTS	Grey serge
TROUSERS	Regulation grey. If worn in year 7 & 8 must be worn with long sleeve grey shirt.
SHIRT	Long sleeve grey shirt or a white short sleeved polo shirt with JHC collar stripes and pocket monogram. Straight hem grey shirt and white polo shirt may be worn out over the shorts. Shaped hem shirts must be tucked in.
SOCKS	Grey with regulation red and gold top
SHOES	Plain black leather, laced, dress
JERSEY	Cardinal red V necked jersey with school monogram
VEST	Cardinal red V-necked with school monogram
JACKET	JHC regulation black softshell jacket
BLAZER	School regulation blazer may be worn.

Boys' Dress Uniform:

Long grey trousers, a white shirt and plain grey or black socks. Plain black leather, laced, flat, dress shoes

School tie must be worn.

PE Uniform - Girls' and Boys':

Plain black shorts or black track pants.

Sports top T-shirt, red and gold. White polyprop may be worn underneath in winter.

Gym shoes with white soles (not to be skate shoes, soft soles without laces or soft sandals)

White or black short socks

Black warm-up hoodie with school logo on front and surname on back, worn with P.E uniform only.

Uniform for Travelling Teams:

Dress uniform with blazer.

General:

Sandals	These are optional in terms 1 and 4. Flat black, plain, with a heel strap and one ankle strap. Thong styles are not permitted. Socks are not to be worn with sandals. Sandals are not to be worn in laboratories and technology rooms
Undergarment	A plain white t-shirt or poly prop may be worn under the uniform tops for extra warmth
Hat	Optional. Regulation JHC cap or bucket hat
Beanie	Optional. Regulation JHC beanie
Scarf	Optional. Regulation Cardinal red with gold stripe
Gloves	Optional. Black

Personal Grooming:

- Hair colour must be natural in appearance. Unnatural and/or multi-coloured hair is unacceptable.
- Extreme hairstyles are not acceptable (including shaved head, mohawks and tails).
- Hair must be tidy, off the face and collar.
- Students with longer hair must have it all tied back with plain hair bands (only colours of the school uniform may be used).
- Boys' faces must be clean shaven.
- No jewellery is to be worn. The exception is one plain gold or silver stud (not ear-rings) in each earlobe.
- No make-up or nail varnish may be worn.

General Points:

- All uniform items are to be worn correctly.
- All students using the workshops must wear protective clothing.
- Skirts must be of a reasonable length, neither very short nor very long.
- Parents are asked to be sure that uniform and footwear are in good order at the start of each term. All garments should be clearly marked with the owner's name.
- If in doubt regarding items of uniform, please check by ringing the school office before a purchase is made.
- If, for any reason a student has to wear an item of non-regulation clothing to school, he/she must bring a note from parent/caregiver explaining the reason and bring this to the Associate Principal or Deputy Principals.
- Uniform items may be loaned in the short term.

The PTA operates a scheme for the sale of second-hand uniforms. Sales are held monthly, at the end of the school year and towards the end of January. The sales will be advertised in The Southland Times. If, for any reason a student has to wear an item of non-regulation clothing to school, they must bring a note from parent/caregiver explaining the reason and bring this to the Associate Principal or Deputy Principals. Uniform items may be loaned in the short term.



SETTLING IN QUESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND HOMESTAY PARENTS

Questions to go through with the students in the first few days

What do I call you? Mum, Dad or your first name?

Chores

What chores will I have?

Laundry

1. Where should I put my dirty clothes?
2. Should I wash my own under-clothes?
3. Where should I dry any clothes I wash?
4. Is there anything I should know about using the washing machine or iron?

Hygiene

1. Where can I keep my toilet bag/gear?
2. When is the best time for me to use the bathroom each morning?
3. When is the best time for me to have shower?
4. Is there a rule about how long I can be in the shower?
5. I know I must have my own shampoo and toothpaste. May I use the bathroom soap?

Family Routines/Rules

1. What time are meals?
2. What would you like me to do at mealtimes? Eg set table, clean table, load/empty dishwasher.
3. What are the rules about having snacks/drinks between meals? What may I have? Should I ask first?
4. What areas of the home are private, e.g. parents bedroom, office?
5. May I put pictures or posters on walls in my bedroom?
6. May I change furniture around in my bedroom?
7. Where can I store my suitcases?
8. What time must I get up on weekday mornings?
9. What time must I get up on weekends and holidays?
10. What time must I go to bed and turn the lights out on weekdays and weekends?
11. If I am invited out to someone's house should I take something?
12. May I use the stereo, television, DVD player, etc?
13. Do you expect me to telephone if I am going to be 10, 20 or 30 minutes late?
 - a. from school
 - b. from any other outing
14. What arrangements are there for making lunch
 - a. on a school day
 - b. at the weekends
15. Where can I find towels, sheets, toilet paper?

Friends

1. Is it ok to bring friends home?
2. Do I need to ask you first?
3. Can I invite friends around in the day? (not opposite sex if parents are not there)
4. Can I have friends to stay overnight?
5. How late can they stay?

Telephone/Internet Use

1. What are the rules about using the telephone including toll calls?
2. Are there time limits on using the phone and Internet?
3. May my friends phone me?

Transport

How do I get to school? How do I go into town? Is there a bus route?

Security

1. How do I lock up your house if I am the last to leave?
2. How do I answer the phone if I am the only one at home?

General

1. Is there anything else I should know about family members?
2. Is there anything else you would like me to know?
3. Emergency number in NZ for dialling Police. Ambulance, Fire is 111.

CONCLUSION

Please discuss this booklet with your students, especially the section on the behaviour code.

The school hopes that you find your experiences in hosting a student from another culture to be enjoyable and rewarding. Please contact us if you have any queries / concerns / grievances.

The Homestay co-ordinator will visit the family twice a year. This is generally when the student is at home.



CONTACTS

Ms Lara Buchanan

Email:

Phone:

Director of International Students

lbuchanan@jameshargest.school.nz

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International Homestay/Student Co-ordinator

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Mrs Megan O'Brien

International Student Support

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School: 03 217 6129 Ext 249

Mr Mike Newell

Email:

Phone:

Principal

principal@jameshargest.school.nz

School: 03 217 6129 Ext 203

International 24/7 Emergency Phone Number - 03 928 5982

James Hargest College:

Phone: Junior Campus: 03 217 9250

Senior Campus: 03 217 6129

Email: international@jameshargest.school.nz

Office hours:

8.00 am – 4.30 pm daily

SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram: [JamesHargestInternationals](https://www.instagram.com/JamesHargestInternationals)



School App: Go to your App store and search 'School Apps NZ' then search 'James Hargest College'



Website: [James Hargest College](https://www.jameshargest.school.nz)



Parent Portal: <https://jameshargest.school.kiwi/>

(Please note: In order to sign in to the parent portal, you will require log-in details.

You can request these by emailing: khodson@jameshargest.school.nz



Facebook: [James Hargest College Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/JamesHargestCollege)