

Cultural Diversity and Effective Homestay Placement

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Homestay is all about people. It's a very personal arrangement when hosts and students share the family home and become a family, often lasting longer than the students' initial stay. Homestay Network has obtained key observations after 22 years as a homestay provider to international students. These are related to cultural diversity and effective homestay placement procedures which benefit the student whilst they reside in homestay for the purpose of studying.

The most popular and sought after hosts are those who offer good quality homes and take a real interest in the students' wellbeing. Students should expect that host families will be able to provide a supportive and safe family environment where English is the primary language spoken at home and with students. Experience shows hosts for international students should be culturally aware and sensitive to the experiences that students face when they arrive into Australia.

Sadly, in the current economic climate too many prospective hosts are looking to attain extra income and wish to host students without fully appreciating the role that they must perform and the purpose of homestay. In these situations students are left feeling like flatmates or boarders rather than family members. When the homestay provider fails to effectively place the student with a suitable family of similar socio-economic status their expectations are not met and problems arise between the host and the student simply due to a difference in living standards.

Research indicates established homestay providers have well honed processes and procedures for the student placement. Long established homestay providers understand how important people are in the process and this cannot be automated by a website and exclude people. Standards must exist to ensure that the student's profile is studied and a quality host family is offered having a history of genuinely caring for students and an appreciation for the cultural diversity. This paper will concentrate on the homestay provider procedures that must be in place to ensure the students welfare.

Key Words

Students

Hosts

Homestay

Hosting

Placement

Accommodation

English