

Homestay Host Guidelines

Prepared by Oya No Kai on behalf of the Japanese Dual Language Immersion Program

The following guidelines are intended to help Japanese Dual Language Immersion Program host families establish and maintain a comfortable homestay experience. The focus here is on homestays for teaching interns -- these are adults who typically stay for several months or more with a host family. During stays of this duration, interns necessarily become integrated to some degree with the host family's domestic patterns. Paying a little extra attention early on to how things should work will pay off later in terms of a more comfortable and relaxing experience.

The Basics

As a host family you are expected to provide a comfortable, safe and supportive environment for your intern, including:

- A private room with adequate heat, light, ventilation and access
- Access to a bathroom, which can be shared with other household members
- Dinner each day
- Food for breakfast, and lunch. Interns pack their lunch for school each day.
- A cell phone
- Wifi access & access to a computer
- Access to laundry facilities
- House key

You can certainly exceed these guidelines if you wish, such as by providing a private bath, separate telephone, monthly cell phone fee, etc.

The First Contact

Soon after the intern arrives, you should do a brief walk around in order to point out some basic housekeeping and other items.

- Location of the sleeping room; where to store clothing, personal items, etc.
- Location of the bathroom(s); where to put their shampoo, razor, etc.

- How to use basic appliances – how to flush the toilet, turn the shower on and off, etc. (be specific here – Japanese appliances don't necessarily work like ours do)
- Where you store food (where they can store their own food items in the kitchen & in the refrigerator), do dishes, put the trash and recycle (and what you recycle)
- Where to hang coats, hats, umbrellas
- How to connect to Wifi
- How to turn on TV or play DVDs
- How to lock and unlock the house
- How to do laundry; they will do their own if you wish, or you can include it with your own loads (many Japanese put laundry in mesh bags to keep it separate – you can just include with other loads)

Some interns arrive very tired and sleepy from jet lag and extended travel. In this case you might do the walk around in phases – when they first arrive, just show them the bedroom and bath and let them rest. On the arrival day, if they arrived early in the morning, try to keep them awake till the evening to help ease recovery from their jet lag.

Other Helpful Assistance

Within several days there are other optional things you can do to help your intern adjust more quickly and have a better experience, including:

- Assist with setting up a bank account, credit card, etc., if they wish (you should not give them money or extend them credit, however – they should have their own). Note that to set up a bank account, the intern will need a piece of mail addressed to him or her at your address.
- Location of nearest library, grocery store, bus stop
- Websites for TriMet, Portland Public Schools, other information sources they may find useful
- Telephone numbers for doctor, dentist, hospital, as seems appropriate
- How to use 911

Shoes and Slippers

Most Japanese avoid wearing shoes inside a house, typically switching to slippers. Sometimes there are separate slippers for use in the bathroom. Explain your household patterns if they are not readily apparent. Some Japanese are completely comfortable wearing shoes inside a house if that is your habit, but in any event you should provide space for house slippers and shoes inside the entry door.

The Bathroom

Sharing bathrooms can be one of the trickiest points of friction and it helps to be a bit explicit about how it would work best for your family. If you have established patterns that work for the family and which are consistent with your household work and school patterns, explain them to the intern. The bathroom may be pretty well booked up in the mornings, for example. Many Japanese take showers or baths in the evening, after dinner and/or just before bed, and this may be a compatible time with respect to other users. If the intern needs to be worked into existing busy times, try to establish a schedule. It may be necessary to start things earlier, for example, in order to fit everyone in. Also, make sure to explain to leave the door open when vacant (Japanese will close the door even if it is vacant).

Family Activities and Outings

To the extent possible, and desired by your intern, you should include your intern into your family recreation activities, such as movies, eating out, physical exercise and sports. Early in the visit the intern may be more interested in certain activities than later on – kids soccer games can get old after a while.

You may also organize some special sightseeing trips for your intern, either brief trips downtown, to museums, gardens, etc., or longer trips to Mt. Hood, the coast, etc. Sometimes it is nice to do this with other families hosting interns. Or just bring along other interns if your intern has made a particular friend. You are not obliged to do this, however.

In general, in the case that the intern accompanies the host family on a day or overnight car trip the host family is expected to pay for travel expenses (don't ask them to share the cost of gas) and food you bring on the trip. The intern pays for personal items and out-of-pocket expenses such as admissions and snacks. The host family can choose to cover these costs as well, if it wishes. Be aware, however, that many interns have been instructed to cover these costs themselves and may be somewhat insistent. Interns are expected to cover other transportation costs themselves, such as for train or air tickets, but please ask them if it is within their budget. It is important to let them know upfront about the trip related cost to join the trip.

Please make sure those trips and outings will be planned with your intern within weekends, holidays, and school breaks, not regular school days.

Phone and Internet

The host family is expected to provide a basic cellphone available for the intern, but this does not include the cost of long distance calls or regular cell phone charges or fee of prepaid talk

minutes. If you wish you can allow the intern to use the phone for these purposes and total up the bill at the end of the month on the basis of the telephone company statement. Be aware, however, that this should be arranged beforehand and can be prone to misunderstandings. It might be a good idea to check with your cell phone provider to add an extra phone line or provide an inexpensive prepaid phone that has basic functions for calling and texting.

Many interns are very conversant with email and the internet and travel with their own laptop.

Wifi needs to be provided by the host family.

Transportation

Interns are responsible for arranging their own transportation to work and for personal activities. Oya No Kai provides each intern with a TriMet bus pass for this reason. Show them where the nearest bus or MAX stop is and, if you are able to, explain some basics about how to get around on public transportation. Certainly if you wish to, you can offer periodic or daily transportation to your intern.

Medical emergencies

Your intern is responsible for health insurance coverage but may need guidance or help in the case of any medical emergency. Know which emergency service location you would use, and point out to them the location of a hospital or emergency room that they could use on their own. Explain how 911 works and how to call a cab if they need transportation when you are not there to help. Also contact the school mentor teacher, Oya no Kai intern coordinator as soon as possible.

- For non-emergency situations urgent care facilities are the most affordable option for interns, weekends + evenings, such as Zoom Care.
- Make a copy of the intern's insurance policy for emergency use.

Intern Responsibilities

Interns have typically been briefed regarding their responsibilities as an intern, but communication regarding your family's expectations and house rules are critical. Host families are strongly encouraged to sit down with the intern in the first week to clarify expectations and check in with their intern regularly to see if there are any concerns or questions. Here are some requests you can make of the intern, as necessary, so that each of you understand the basic rules of the household:

- Notify you if he or she will not be home for a meal, such as dinner
- Notify you if he or she will stay somewhere else overnight
- Be home by a certain time in the evening, say 11:00 pm, and notify you if he or she will be coming in later
- No overnight romantic visitors
- Ask you beforehand if the intern wishes to have a daytime guest over for a visit; you have the right to ask that such socializing take place outside your home

You can expect your intern to help around the house to some degree, including:

- Preparing their own breakfast and lunch (to bring to school), if these are not set meals in your household (show them where the food is located, which preparation area to use, etc.)
- Cleaning up their own dishes, food prep, etc.; if all members of your household share duties such as dishwashing the intern can be requested to join in as well
- Maintaining their own room; show them where the vacuum is, other cleaning materials
- Turning off lights, appliances, etc. when they are finished

Some things you should avoid asking your intern to do include:

- Babysitting
- Japanese Tutoring service/session
- Yard care such as lawn mowing
- House projects such as painting
- Washing the car or other large maintenance chores

You may find that your intern volunteers for certain activities such as this and, if you are satisfied that the offer is voluntary and in good spirit, then you certainly can accept it.

COVID-Related Guidelines

As news related to coronavirus continues to develop, we are committed to guiding our community with the most up-to-date recommendations to ensure the well-being of our hosts and students. Below we have compiled a list of general guidelines to help your family adjust to hosting interns during COVID-19.

General Safety Guidelines

We recommend that all of our hosts and interns follow the latest [CDC guidelines](#) to keep yourself and others safe.

Cleaning and Washing Hands

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Avoid close contact

- [Stay at least 6 feet \(about two arms' length\) from other people.](#)
- Keeping distance from others is especially crucial for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.](#)

Face Coverings

- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are sick.
- Everyone should wear [cloth face-covering](#) public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are hard to maintain.

Talking about COVID-19 and Other Difficult Topics with Students

Your intern may have concerns about how specific incidences are perceived in the United States. Host families should be aware of how your student's emotional outlook may be affected by these events. Students may feel overwhelmed and anxious, especially interns, who may be having difficulty processing how this information affects them. Host families should practice cultural sensitivity and have an open discussion with your intern to help them understand, cope, and even make a positive contribution to others.

Preparing for Student Arrival

Here are a few recommendations for when your intern arrives:

- **Student Health Insurance:** make sure they have their insurance info and card handy, it might be wise to have a photocopy or cellphone photo of this important information, just in case.
- **Health Care Provider:** interns may need help in locating an in-network health care provider near your home or their school. We suggest sitting down and doing this together!
- **Other Precautions:** As a precaution, it may be helpful to have the hours of availability and locations of nearby COVID-19 testing sites on hand which can reassure your student that procedures are in place in case of emergency.

Daily Routines

As school districts finalize their operational plans for the start of school in the fall, many schools may choose a temporary period of online learning or a hybrid learning model with both in-person and virtual instruction. In either case, it is beneficial for the interns and hosts to set a daily routine. Whether it's study time, dinner, or household chores, it gives everyone a sense of clarity and something to look forward to each day.

Encouraging Healthy Habits

Maintaining healthy habits is now more critical than ever. Daily self-care benefits our physical as well as our mental well-being. Whether the student is distance learning from home or going to school, interns should keep healthy habits such as regular personal hygiene, eating, and sleeping through the school year. A great way to bond with your new intern is to exercise together, and getting outside to walk, run, and play sports are just a few ideas.

Travel Policy

Oya No Kai is closely monitoring developments in global travel advisories and local and state mandates around travel. We continue to advise all our interns, hosts, and employees to stay vigilant and adhere to all policies and guidelines provided by their authorities. These recommendations include:

- Interns must observe their state, local, and school policies on self-quarantining upon entry into The United States.
- After entry, all unnecessary domestic and intern travel should be avoided until further notice.
- Interns should limit exposure to crowded public areas.

As the situation evolves, we will continue to work hard to ensure regular communication with our community and to keep you informed of any new recommendations. The safety of our community remains our top priority.