## Annual Training for Homestay Hosts

## Video Script

### Slide 1: Introduction

Hello everyone, and welcome to this Training Video for homestay hosts from the Victorian Department of Education and Training. Your school will conduct the main training for you, so this video is simply to remind you of some of your rights and responsibilities under the law and to get the conversation started.

### Slide 2: Thank you!

The first thing is to say, “thank you”! You are a vital part of the International Student Program; it couldn’t happen without you. Your warm kindness and generosity are what makes the students’ experiences so deeply fulfilling and successful. They gain a new family and feel that they belong.

The fact that you’re here suggests that you’ve had positive experiences, so you’ll already know about the rewards: the cultural exchange, the sharing of ideas and experiences and laughter when things go right, and also when they go a bit awry.

### Slide 3: Homestay laws and regulations act as protection

The laws around homestays are there to protect both you and the student. As you know, the students can be very young. And they are vulnerable as they venture away from their own families and homes into a new culture and language with such courage. The regulations give consistency, transparency and fairness to the homestay program. And by doing this training and complying with the laws, you protect both your student and yourself from potentially difficult situations.

### Slide 4: Working as a team acts as protection

You, the school, the Department’s International Student Program and the laws around homestays are all part of the same team. Keeping the communication doors open is a major key for success. And your contact person at your school, your International Student Coordinator (ISC)—and your Homestay Coordinator if there is one—are always there for you for support and information.

### Slide 5: What to provide for your student

You’ll already know the regulations about what to provide for your student, including a room of their own, study facilities, and 3 healthy meals a day and snacks that align with their dietary and medical needs. You’ll welcome them to have access to all the facilities and shared living spaces. Remember to check that your smoke alarms are working. Also, tell your ISC if anything changes in your home, such as moving house or doing renovations.

### Slide 6: Orientation for your student

The importance and value of the orientation is written into the policy for international students, and it sets up the foundation for them feeling that they belong and are safe and know what to expect. Right at the start, show them around your home and local area so they know where, for example, the shops and public transport are. And how to get to school and back home again.

Also from the start, be very clear about your safety information and household protocols: things like security, using the phone & internet, what’s expected around mealtimes, curfews and having visitors.

The ISC will already have given them the Student Safety Card so go through this carefully with them so that they understand how to get help and that they must keep it with them all the time. Keeping a photo of the card in your phone and also in theirs, can help avoid sticky situations if the card gets lost.

### Slide 7: Insurance

Remember to renew your insurance that covers your student’s belongings as well as your own. This must include legal liability for no less than 20 million dollars. This sounds like a lot, but it’s what insurance companies do.

Your insurance needs to cover you for personal injury to your student while they’re staying with you and for any accidental damage that might occur. If you own your home, you must have home and contents insurance; if you rent, you need to have contents insurance.

And if any damage does happen to your home that was caused, or you consider was caused by your student beyond normal wear and tear, make sure to tell the ISC as soon as possible.

### Slide 8: Child Safety Laws and Mandatory Reporting

You will already have come across the Child-Safety and Mandatory Reporting laws and know that you must participate in your school’s Child Safety training.

The main thing to remember is that if you become aware of any allegations of child abuse, from any source and in any context, the law says that you must report these immediately to your ISC.

Sometimes people are not sure if they should say something just in case it’s not true. However, the law says that you must report. This is a big one.

### Slide 9: Working with Children Check (WWCC)

The *Working with Children Check* supports the Child Safety laws. As you know, it’s compulsory for every adult living in your home—including you—to have one of these and it’s easy to apply for it online.

You will need to let your ISC know the date of birth and contact details of all adults in your home, showing them some ID for each adult. They also need to know if there are any changes in your household—an adult comes to live with you, or leaves. And if there is a change to the status of the Working with Children Check for any of the adults in your home, again, your ISC needs to know immediately.

An adult in this context means anyone over the age of 18. This includes your own children and also any other international student staying with you who turns 18. If an adult stays in your home for 30 days or more in a year, whether it’s regularly or irregularly—a night here and there—they’ll need to get their *Working with Children Check*.

It’s a bit of an anomaly that if you have two international students and one is over 18, the 18-year-old counts both as an adult who needs a *Working with Children Check*, and as a child in need of protection.

### Slide 10: Your role in critical (serious) incidents and emergencies

In the unlikely event that a serious incident or emergency happened that involved your student, or something happened to you or your family and home, then of course you would call triple zero and give first aid, etc. You would ring your ISC, so keep their contact details handy. They would ring your student’s parents or legal guardian. As you may already know, the school has an obligation to do critical incident planning, and as a homestay host, you must participate in their annual training about this. So if something did go wrong unexpectedly, you and the school would already know what to do.

### Slide 11: Supervision of your student

Regarding supervision of your student, the rules are fairly straightforward. If you’re unsure about anything, ask your ISC because they know the exact parameters.

The main thing to remember is that you need to know where your student is and who they’re with, day and night. But sometimes things happen, and so, if for any reason you couldn’t do this, let the ISC know.

Your student can’t supervise younger children, so they can’t be a babysitter. And they’ll need extra-special supervision around water, whether it’s a pool, the beach, a river – many international students can’t swim and don’t know the risks.

### Slide 12: Supervision of your student cont.

With students over 18, if they drive, they’d need to follow the road rules and your household rules, and also have permission from the school, which will have its own Student Driving Policy. Talk it through first with your ISC.

You might want to take your student on a trip during the school holidays, and this could be a wonderful experience, as long as their parents or legal guardian and the school have given permission, and everyone has completed the documentation.

### Slide 13: Supervision of your student cont.

Your student needs to keep you informed, telling you where they are and who they’re with, or whether they’ll be home late or plan to go out with friends.

If they go somewhere without permission, or you can’t contact them, even for a couple of hours, ring your ISC immediately.

The key point, always, is to keep the school informed. Your ISC can help you if you have concerns around any part-time work your student may do. Or if you think they are participating in high-risk activities such as going to dangerous places, staying out past their curfew time, being involved with drugs or alcohol, or any other worrying behaviour.

### Slide 14: Helping your student at school

It’s not your responsibility to ensure that the student passes their subjects at school or to organise tutoring or extra outside help for them if they are struggling. However, you can encourage and support them with their homework and help them to have their school uniform or sports gear ready to go when they need them.

In common with many teenagers, they may sometimes need you to help them get up in time and get to school. International students can become very tired, and their attendance requirements are strict. So this is a valuable way to support them. Remember to let the ISC know if they’ll be absent or late.

And as always, if you have any concerns at all about your student’s welfare, academic progress or attendance issues, remember that you can always contact your ISC for information, advice and support.

### Slide 15: Conclusion

Thank you for watching this Annual Training video for Homestay Hosts. And thank you again for being such an integral part of the team that supports international students, opening your home and sharing your daily life with them. Your work and care are so valuable, and I hope you have a wonderful year with your student.