



International Student Orientation Handbook



CHRISTCHURCH | NEW ZEALAND



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●● ALPHA HOME STAY

You will be met by a representative of ALPHA and/ or the Home stay family at Christchurch airport and taken to your new home for the duration of your course. You will be provided with time to rest and get over your flight.

It is recommended that you do not go to sleep until the evening to allow your body to get used to the new time zone.

Alpha Homestays

PO Box 20211 Bishopdale
Christchurch 8543
Phone (03) 359 1525
Mob 027 348 0535
Email homestay@alpha.school.nz

●● IMPORTANT RULES

- It is important to remember that you are coming to a very different culture than your country.
- When arriving in New Zealand you have to follow the rules imposed by each family, but those listed below are general for all.
- During the first weeks of your course you are asked not to make any social plans that do not include your host family. This means that as soon as the class schedule has ended for the day, you should be directed towards your homes as it is important to create links specifically for learning the language.
- During the first weeks you should not be going out with friends because family ties need to be strengthened.
- For weekend outings it must be planned at least 2 or 3 days in advance to notify your family.
- If you leave during the weekend you must notify your family if you do not require dinner so that they do not prepare extra food.
- It is essential to take into account that the relationship established with your families will help you to improve your level of English, as they are fully prepared to assist you.
- You must address your family with respect, understanding that they want the best for you and care about you.
- If you have any problems with your family it is important to alert the school so that they will try to fix it.





●● CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch city is located midway down the east coast of the South Island, just north of Banks Peninsula.

With a population of approximately 324,300 people, Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island, and the gateway for visitors touching down at Christchurch International Airport to explore the city.

You will find that Christchurch is an attractive city where you can study while experiencing a lifestyle, which is stimulating and relaxing. There is a wide range of attractions and recreational activities. You can be strolling along the beach - or swimming, surfing and sailing - and only one hour later you can be in the mountains - skiing and snow boarding or hiking - or fishing in the beautiful lakes and rivers.

Christchurch is also a centre of culture. Its cultural heritage is European and Maori. The city was established by the British in the nineteenth century and it is described as the most English city in New Zealand. The stone buildings of its colonial architecture mix with modern buildings.

If you come from the Northern Hemisphere the seasons are "upside down". February is the middle of summer and July is the middle of winter.

Christchurch has a dry climate compared with other places in New Zealand.

Summer is usually mild and dry.

Winter is cooler. At night the temperature can be below 0° Celsius but the days are often sunny.

Autumn and spring have mild days but the nights are cool. Christchurch has an average annual rainfall of 648 millimeters.

These figures on temperature, sun and rain are a guide to normal conditions.

<i>February</i>	
Maximum during the day	(°C) 23.9
Minimum at night	(°C) 8.2
Sun (hours/month)	188.6
Rain (days/month)	5.1
<i>August</i>	
Maximum during the day	(°C) 14.4
Minimum at night	(°C) 0.2
Sun (hours/month)	147.9
Rain (days/month)	8.2

●● SOME APPROXIMATE EXPENSES

- Taxis – depending on distance travelled – but you can expect to pay about \$20-\$30.00 for an average 15 minute ride.
- To go out to a club you would expect to pay approximately \$9 or more for a drink.
- Basic cell phone usage approximately \$20 per month.
- McDonalds Big Mac combo (large size) approximately \$8.
- Pizza \$10.
- Coffee \$4.70 and cake \$3.50.
- Ice Cream (in a cone) approximately \$3.50.
- A bottle of coke \$3.50.
- A reasonable second hand car \$2000 to \$3000
- Petrol \$1.95 per litre.

●● THE LANGUAGE

New Zealand has three 'official' languages: English; Māori and New Zealand Sign Language. English is the language most commonly spoken. At first you may have difficulty with the New Zealand accent. There are also some words and expressions that are distinctly New Zealand. You will soon get used to them.

Most New Zealanders are friendly and relaxed. It is not unusual for a stranger in a shop or at the bus stop to talk to you. However, some New Zealanders are not used to speaking with people from other countries and can be a little shy. They may not know what to say.

●● WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP COMMUNICATION:

- Speak as clearly as you can and not too quickly.
- Do try to speak even if you make mistakes. Don't keep quiet because your English is not perfect, just explain that you're learning English. Most Kiwis are very understanding of this and want to be helpful.
- Ask people to speak more slowly or repeat something.
- Improve your English by taking every opportunity to talk. The more you speak the more fluent you will become.

●● HELPING YOU LEARN ENGLISH

The faster you learn English and adjust to thinking in English the more you will get out of your New Zealand experience. Current and former international students in New Zealand strongly agree that the most important factor in a successful New Zealand experience is English proficiency. You will need to be able to speak, read, write and listen in English while you live and study in New Zealand.

You should practice your English as much as possible. Go to English movies, listen to English programmes on the radio and watch English TV programmes – especially the news. Read a lot of English. New Zealand newspapers and magazines are available on the internet – (e.g. www.stuff.co.nz, www.nzherald.co.nz, www.cuisine.co.nz, www.unlimited.co.nz). You can also use the search term ESL in an internet search engine to access English Language Exercises.



It's a good idea to have a good electronic dictionary. You should also have a good hard copy English language dictionary – one that gives clear explanations of English words such as Collins Cobuild or Longmans Language Activator.

In New Zealand you will learn English more quickly if you use the language. Don't be afraid to speak and ask questions in English! Look at the possibility of joining the local library. There may be a charge for this.

●● THE PEOPLE

What are people in New Zealand like?

The ethnic make-up of the New Zealand population is diverse, with a mix of Maori ethnic groups European, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and people from the Pacific region. People in New Zealand are generally friendly and many love sports and the outdoors.

●● ADJUSTING TO NEW ZEALAND CULTURE

Greetings and goodbyes

Most people say "hello" or "Hi". In a more formal situation say "Good morning", "Good afternoon" or "Good evening". When you leave friends say "Bye" or "See you later" or "Cheers". In a more formal situation say, "It was nice to meet you" or "Goodbye". Generally New Zealanders are not openly affectionate people and can be reserved and do not kiss on greeting or departing.

"It's my shout"

If someone offers to 'shout' you a drink or a meal or to the movies they are offering to pay. Otherwise you are usually expected to pay for yourself.

Being on time, punctuality

It is important to be on time in New Zealand. If you have an appointment at 10.30, be there at that time – no later. If you are invited to someone's house for a meal try not to be more than 15 minutes late.

Queuing

When you are waiting with others at a bus stop, in a shop or for a taxi, wait in a line or 'queue'. It is important in New Zealand to wait your turn.

Names

New Zealanders usually have three names – a first name, a middle name and a family name. In New Zealand people often use first names except in a formal situation or when people are much older than you. Address them as Mr. for a man, Mrs. for a married woman or Ms (pronounced mizz). Ms is used for married or single women. Use these titles with their family name until you know them better. If you are not sure what to call someone simply ask them, "What shall I call you?"

Independence

Many New Zealanders, especially pakeha encourage their children to be independent. Children are brought up to speak out and think for themselves. Teachers expect children at school to find answers for themselves and ask questions if they don't understand. Young adults often leave home once they have a job.

Maori hospitality

You may be invited to visit a marae. You will probably be given a traditional welcome. After every speech there is a song in the Maori language. This welcome is called a powhiri. If you are going to a marae it is a good idea to learn a little about the Maori customs or kawa. Most libraries have books on this.

Humour

It is often difficult to understand the humour of another culture. Many New Zealanders like to make jokes. Sometimes they may seem to be making fun of you but usually this just means they like and accept you. This is called 'teasing'. The best thing to do is enjoy the joke too.

Bedtime

Most New Zealanders go to bed around 10pm and get up between 6.30am and 7.30am. It is better not to telephone someone between 10pm and 7.30am. People often like to stay up later on Friday and Saturday evenings and sleep longer on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Smoking

Smoking has become less acceptable because of the health risks. You cannot smoke in public buildings. Most people go outside if they want to smoke.

Housework

Men, women and children usually share the housework. If you are a guest you are expected to make your own bed and keep your room tidy. Usually a guest offers to help do the dishes after a meal.

Meals

Breakfast is usually between 7am and 9am, lunch between 12pm and 2pm and dinner or tea between 6pm and 8pm. Most people eat their main meal in the evening. People from overseas get confused over the word 'tea'. If someone asks you to tea in the evening they mean dinner. If they ask you to tea in the morning or afternoon they probably mean a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits or cake.

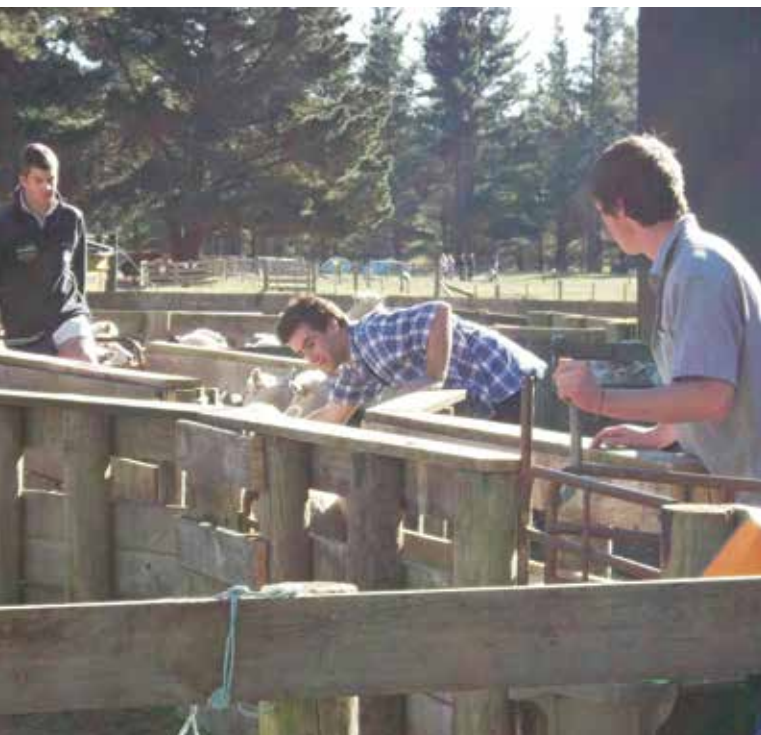
●● CULTURAL ASPECTS

Everyone who lives in another country goes through a period of uncertainty while they get used to their new environment.

The way it happens and how long it lasts differs from person to person but expect it to last at least two months. The first few weeks are usually the most difficult. Most people arriving here from other countries are tired from travelling and emotionally sensitive because of all the goodbyes they have said. Suddenly everything is different – the air, weather, food, water, language, people, houses and ways of doing things.

Generally you will feel excited at first but this may change to feeling homesick and lonely. Sometimes people don't feel well because they need to adjust to new food. It is normal to feel like this and it will pass. It is all a part of 'culture shock'.

It will help if you can talk to someone who understands – perhaps another student who has been here for some time, the student counsellor or a host parent. It is also important to make an effort to settle in. Accept interesting opportunities, try new things, keep busy and don't stay at home too much. Be patient with yourself – remember that culture shock is quite natural and will pass.



●● CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Like people of any nationality, New Zealanders have their own customs. Some of these may differ from where you come from. Some examples include:

- Generally New Zealanders are casual and relaxed, and dress informally on most occasions, including when we go to cafes or shopping.
- Many New Zealanders have a quite direct and frank way of speaking.
- New Zealanders are not always punctual for social occasions. Don't be concerned or offended if someone says they will meet you at, for example, 1.30pm and they don't arrive until 1.45pm.
- Appointments are made in advance to see professional people (e.g. to see a doctor) and you need to be on time.
- People are usually very happy to answer questions, so don't be shy.
- Personal privacy is important and subjects such as salary, mortgages and age are not often discussed by New Zealanders. These topics are not usually discussed outside of the family.
- Sometimes New Zealanders can be offended if people stare (look closely) at them and it may be considered rude and aggressive.
- Sometimes New Zealanders can be offended by personal comments such as "you have put on weight", "she is skinny" or "his hair is very grey".
- Generally people in New Zealand, especially adults, like to hear people say "please" and "thank you" when paying for goods and services or when help has been given.
- New Zealanders find spitting and littering offensive.
- New Zealanders mostly speak quietly when on public transport or in public spaces, even when with friends.
- Many New Zealanders have pets, most commonly a cat or dog.
- New Zealanders can be passionate about sport – particularly rugby. Playing sport is a great way to make friends.
- New Zealanders often don't eat at the table but with a plate on their knees in front of the television.
- Smoking is not permitted in any Restaurants or Bars or any public building in New Zealand.
- New Zealanders don't carry much cash as electronic methods of payment are widely used. It is not safe to carry large sums of cash.

●● CULTURE SHOCK

Living in a foreign culture is an experience we often look forward to with excitement and enthusiasm. However, many of us are often unprepared for the extent of the cultural dissimilarity we encounter. Culture shock is very real and all international students entering a foreign culture are affected by it in some way.

The automatic responses you used at home may not be applicable in New Zealand. It is common for international students to experience feelings of euphoria upon arriving in New Zealand, often called the honeymoon period. Everything appears new and exciting. However upon settling into the routine of study people may experience feelings of frustration, loneliness or uneasiness. Remember that feelings of frustration or uneasiness are a natural part of adapting to a new culture.

Sometimes you may feel as if you lack direction, not knowing what to do or how to do things in New Zealand, and not knowing what is appropriate and inappropriate. Often the way that you lived or behaved before is not accepted or considered normal in the new place.

Here are some other possible symptoms of culture shock you may experience:

- You may feel isolated or frustrated.
- You may become homesick.
- You may experience anger or hostility toward your new home.
- You may become overly dependent upon other students from your own culture.
- You may doubt your decision to come to New Zealand.

You may experience one or more of these symptoms, and different people will experience them in varying degrees of intensity. It is important for you to realize that you will probably experience culture shock before you begin your cultural adaptation, and that this is normal.

●● WAYS TO COPE WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Below are some ways that you might want to try to combat culture shock.

- Remember that experiencing culture shock is a normal part of the adaptation process.
- Don't put too much pressure on yourself, adapting will take time. Be patient.
- Keep a journal, it can really show you how you're doing if you read what you wrote when you first arrived and compare it to several months later.
- Talk to someone who has been through the cultural adaptation process. This person can probably give you a positive perspective on the experience you are having.
- Be open-minded and try to remember that New Zealand is not your home country. People will behave in ways that may seem to you odd or even rude, but you must try to avoid judging New Zealanders by your own cultural standards.
- Keep yourself busy and active; keep your mind occupied.
- Avoid the temptation to spend all of your time with students from your own culture. Maintain some contact with these students. This will give you a feeling of belonging and you will reduce your feelings of loneliness and alienation.
- Don't forget about all the good things about the experience of living in New Zealand.
- Exercise or develop a hobby.
- Establish simple goals and evaluate your progress.

●● COPING WITH HOMESICKNESS

Most people have felt homesick (when you miss family and friends at home) at some time. Beginning life and study in a new country can generate both excitement and anxiety about the move, the study, and meeting new people. The most common times to feel homesick are several weeks before leaving home, or in the first few days or weeks of arriving. Or you might initially be feeling okay, only to find yourself feeling homesick later on, perhaps around a birthday, or at the start of your second year.

Away from home you may find it more difficult to cope with problems that may arise. Feeling homesick is normal.

Here are a few suggestions that may help you

- Talk to someone you trust about it. If you haven't made friends here, then try talking to a teacher, tutor, nurse, chaplain or counsellor at your education provider.
- Remember that other people will have similar feelings, even though you think they may be doing fine.
- Keep in regular contact with family and friends at home; email, phone or write letters. Don't be afraid to tell them how you're really feeling and of any problems. Let them know you want to hear from them.
- Remember to get plenty of sleep and to eat good food.
- Give yourself enough time to adjust; you don't have to get everything right straight away. Learn from your mistakes.
- You don't have to rush into making major decisions, for example about staying or leaving.
- Be realistic about what to expect from student life and from yourself. Seek new opportunities. Get involved in an activity you enjoy or try new ones in your spare time, when you're not studying. At the start of the academic year many new people will be joining clubs and groups – and you are unlikely to be the only new person.
- If you are finding study too hard, talk to your teacher.
- Discover and become familiar with your neighbourhood or town.
- Write a diary to record your experiences and thoughts.

- Try something new or involve yourself in some activity. Don't wait for feelings of homesickness to disappear automatically. Problems can show up later as headaches, tiredness, illness, or lack of motivation. If you stop being able to do normal social and academic things, get professional help from your doctor or the counselling service at your education provider.



●● MONEY

New Zealand is largely a cashless society. Many people pay their bills by EFTPOS or transfer money through the internet, or the direct credit system of a bank. It is therefore not necessary to carry large amounts of cash with you.

The New Zealand currency is the New Zealand dollar.

Notes: \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100.

Coins: 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1, \$2.

●● BANKS

There are many different banks to choose from. Each is a little different but most offer similar services.

Some banks offer an international student account. Banks are usually open 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

There are two main types of bank accounts

Current accounts - Use this account for everyday use. You can get a cheque book and an EFTPOS card.

Savings account – Banks pay interest on money in this account.

Always read the terms and conditions as bank charges vary.

Opening an Account

You will need:

- Two forms of identification (ID) – your passport should be one of them.
- An address in Christchurch.

Common Ways of Paying for Things

- Cash
- EFTPOS Card – The shop or restaurant swipes your card and you enter a personal 4 digit number (called a PIN). You can also use your EFTPOS card to get cash from an automatic teller machine (ATM) 24 hours a day. You insert your card into the machine and enter your PIN.

●● SHOPPING

Most shops are open 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday.

Malls are generally open 9.00am to 6.00pm 7 days with late nights (to 9.00pm) on Thursday and Friday nights.

The Main Types of Shops are:

Supermarkets

Sell groceries, fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and essential household items such as rubbish bags and kitchenware. Opening hours vary but they are usually 8am to 10pm. Some are open to midnight or 24 hours.

Dairies

Small, traditional shops that sell a range of essential items such as newspapers, bread and milk as well as some groceries, fruit and vegetables. They are usually more expensive than supermarkets but are often much closer to where you live. Opening hours vary but are generally 7am to 7pm or 9pm.

Chemists/Pharmacies

Sell toiletries and pharmaceutical products (such as prescriptions from your doctor) and develop photographs.

Department Stores

Sell a wide range of products from household goods to clothes.

Hardware Stores

Sell building and carpentry supplies, decorating supplies and various household items including plants and gardening products.

Homeware Stores

Sell furniture and appliances for the home.

Petrol Stations

Many sell some essential items as well as petrol. Some are open 24 hours a day.

Specialised Food Shops

There are a number of specialized food shops. These include Asian, halal meat and organic meat, fruit and vegetables.

Orchards and Vegetable and Fruit Stalls

You can go to orchards and market gardens and buy fresh fruit and vegetables directly from them. It's often cheaper and you can buy in large quantities. Sometimes, mostly in summer you can pick your own fruit cheaply. These places are often on the roads leading out of the city.

●● CHRISTCHURCH HEALTH SERVICES

Emergency Phone Number – 111
(Police, Fire, Ambulance)

Christchurch Public Hospital

Riccarton Ave

Phone - (03) 364 0640

24 Hour Surgery and Urgent Pharmacy

Corner Bealey Ave and Colombo Street,
City

Surgery - (03) 365 7777

Pharmacy - (03) 366 4439

New Brighton Health Care

Dr Narcis Sitjes (Spanish speaking)

22 Union St,

New Brighton

Phone - (03) 388 7582

Hornby Surgery

371 Main South Road,

Hornby

Phone - (03) 349 8613

Bishopdale Medical Centre

Corner of Farrington Ave and Eastling Street

Phone - (03) 359 8591

(Garden City Dental)

222 Bealey Ave

Phone - (03) 379 6222

●● CHRISTCHURCH TRAVEL INFORMATION

Taxi Companies

Gold Band Taxi's (03) 3795 795

Blue Star Taxi's (03) 3799 799

Bus Information

The Bus Exchange is located on Lichfield Street & Colombo Street in the city.

Metro Cards are also available which give you a discounted bus fare.

●● ROAD SAFETY INCLUDING PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING SAFETY:

Pedestrian Safety Information

- Cars won't always stop for pedestrians.
- Use controlled crossing points (pedestrian crossing, pedestrian traffic lights) where possible.

Using the Kerb Drill to Cross the Road

- Find a safe place to cross
- Stop one step back from the kerb (practice this by walking to the kerb and taking one step back).
- Look and listen for traffic wherever it may come from (Look right, look left, and look right again).
- If there is traffic coming wait until it has passed, then look and listen for traffic again.
- When there is no traffic coming walk quickly straight across the road, looking each way for traffic.

Skateboards

Local councils often have bylaws about where you are allowed to use skateboards. Areas where you may not use are usually sign posted, but you are not permitted to skateboard on the road, and generally you will not be permitted to use skateboards on busy footpaths.

Cyclists Safety Information

Cyclists are required by law to wear a properly-fitted, standards-approved bicycle helmet, when riding a bicycle on a road. Cyclists should ride on the road not on the footpath. The New Zealand Police recommend that children under 10 years ride on the road only when accompanied by a responsible older person.



•• WHERE WE ARE/LOCATION

Training Centre National Trade Academy

890 McLeans Island Road
PO Box 11344
Christchurch 8051
New Zealand
Phone: +64 3 360 2192
Fax: +64 3 360 2193



●● WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

- 3 tee shirts
 - 3 long sleeved warm shirts
 - 1 warm good jacket (for school & going out)
 - 1 warm sweater/jersey/jumper
 - 1 warm work jacket/parka
 - 2 pairs of warm pajama's
 - 6 sets of underwear
 - Thermal/warm undergarments
 - 6 pair's warm socks
 - 2 pair's good jeans/long pants
 - 2 pairs of trousers for work
 - 1 tracksuit/casual wear
 - Woolen hat/beanie
 - Gloves/mittens and scarf
 - Swimming costume
 - Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap etc) – enough for first month
 - Medication if needed
 - 2-3 pair's footwear
-

●● OPTIONAL

- Camera
- CDs of favorite music
- Books
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Personal – family photos etc
- Laptop

●● NTA WILL PROVIDE

Refer to your course information.

●● PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

(\$NZ 100.00 per week) for the following:

- Bus fares
 - International phone cards
 - Pocket money – for toiletries, movies, trips, snack foods
 - Emergency Doctor's visits – student must pay first then claim back on insurance
 - Dentist
-

●● MEDICAL INSURANCE

Southern Cross travel Insurance provide travel and medical insurance that meets the requirements of New Zealand Immigration at a cost of \$NZ250.00 for 6 months. NTA can arrange this for you if you prefer.

●● TRANSPORT

You will be issued with a Metrocard. Metrocard is the easy way for you travel on the buses. The card is free. All you have to do is load \$10 onto Metrocard for it to work. Thereafter, you can recharge your card with a minimum of \$10.



TRAINING CENTRE

890 McLeans Island Road, PO Box 390-69, Christchurch 8545, New Zealand

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