



VOLLEYBALL CANADA
NATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM
HOMESTAY HANDBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

'Homestay' is when a local family welcomes a visiting school-aged athlete into their home. This handbook supplements the Volleyball Canada NEP Homestay Agreement.

The homestay family offers a safe, supportive environment that provides stability for the athlete, allowing them to focus their efforts on success in volleyball and academic achievement. The family that provides this home base for the athlete is called the homestay/host family.

Being a host family can be a wonderful opportunity to build a lasting relationship with a talented and dedicated young athlete. It allows you to learn more about the game of volleyball from the perspective of the athlete and their unique positions on the team. It offers you an opportunity to see someone grow in confidence and ability over a very short period of time and follow their careers as they move to high levels with the national teams, college and universities or to professional clubs overseas. Opening your homes to young volleyball athletes and giving them an opportunity to share experiences within the homestay family unit is critical but also, for the athlete being hosted, it is a chance to share different cultural and social experiences. It is also a time to make new friends, renew old friendships, share ideas, laugh, and live in a different family situation.

Homestay families are vital to the success of our National Excellence Program (NEP). It is important that Volleyball Canada and host families work together and set high standards for the athletes to achieve and ensure the success of the NEP.

Volleyball Canada greatly appreciates those serving as host families for the duration of the National Excellence Program (September - December 2025).

HOST FAMILY GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Homestay family responsibilities will begin September 13th, and will continue for the duration of the 4-month program until December 18th, 2026.

Grade 10, 11 and 12 female athletes from across Canada will be participating in Volleyball Canada's National Excellence Program while completing their studies remotely from their home province.

The following information outlines the processes, timelines, responsibilities, and expectations of host families. As a host family you will receive financial compensation of \$950/athlete/month. This will be paid by Volleyball Canada directly to the homestay contact.

These Guidelines provide minimum standards that must be met when arranging housing options.

Volleyball Life

- Volleyball Canada NEP athletes are all members of Volleyball Canada and currently sit within the initial stages of the High-Performance Pathway towards the 2032 Summer Olympics.
- Volleyball is a high intensity sport with stringent training both on and off the court. This includes a comprehensive, individualized strength program. Recovery strategies include good sleep and a diet that serves as fuel for their training demands.

Family Life

- Treat the athlete as you would want your child to be treated if they were away from home; make the athlete feel comfortable, not only in your home but in your community.
- Support athletes as you would your own children, while still being mindful of the role of the athlete's parents. Homestays do not replace a parent/guardian role.



- Provide a great social and cultural experience - as a resident of the Host Province, you are aware of the many attractions - culture, history, Indigenous heritage, politics, art, sport, nature, and national celebrations.
- It is expected that the athlete(s) have their own space within the home (can be shared among athletes). The privacy of their own space is considered important both for purposes of getting adequate rest as well as having space to study.
- Consideration also needs to be given to providing a safe place to air and dry an athlete's equipment. Athletes will also need access to laundry facilities and detergent.
- Host Family Absences - if a host family has vacation plans that will result in overnight absences, the process will be to contact the Program Coordinator who will help facilitate alternative arrangements with another approved host family. It is important that as much notice as possible be given. *More details provided in the "Period of Host Absences" section below.*
- The homestay family must be notified in advance if the NEP athlete intends to bring any guest over, pending the host family's approval. No guest (aside from a NEP teammate) is permitted to stay overnight in the host home when visiting an athlete. Please utilize the travel form accordingly.
- In the event of an emergency, the Program Coordinator and/or Head Coach are to be advised as soon as possible.

Overnight Stays

If an athlete intends to stay away from their host environment overnight or for an extended period, they are to follow the guidelines set out by the program. Athletes are encouraged to take ownership of this process and not rely on parents or host parents to make the arrangements for them.

Stay with Other Host Family

1. Athlete/s to speak with their host family to seek approval for another athlete to stay over.
2. Host families confirm stay with one another by phone, email, or text.
3. **Athlete** informs the Program Coordinator of the arrangement by phone, text, or email **PRIOR to 3pm** of the date of the overnight stay.

Stay with Family or Relatives

Volleyball Canada acknowledges the important role that families play in supporting their child. The intention of the Homestay Program is to create a supportive and comfortable environment for all athletes. Time spent away from the homestay environment may affect an athlete's ability to integrate with their host family and parents are encouraged to be mindful of this.

If a family member or relatives wish for the athlete to stay with them for one or more nights, the request must be made using the following guidelines:

1. Athlete to notify the Program Coordinator with family's intended stay including dates and address of accommodation. This is to occur a minimum of 48 hrs prior to the arrival.
2. The Program Coordinator will confirm the arrangement with the NEP athlete, homestay family and NEP parent(s) over email.

If an athlete wishes to stay with someone outside of the NEP Homestay Program or their immediate family, the athlete should email the Program Coordinator, homestay family and their parent/guardian with the date/s, contact details and address of accommodation. This is to occur a minimum of 48 hrs prior to the stay. The athlete, parents and homestay family will be informed via email if the request is approved or denied.

Travel Outside of the Host City

Volleyball Canada **does not provide insurance** for any individual travel plans and will only assume responsibility/insurance coverage for **team travel** (travel which includes all athletes). Should an athlete



decide to travel outside of the Host city during their time at NEP, Volleyball Canada requests a **travel request form** to be **emailed** to the Program Coordinator, at least 48hrs prior to intended travel and you **must receive confirmation** of receipt from Program Coordinator before travel. The following parties **MUST** be copied into the email to the Program Coordinator: Athlete Homestay & Athlete Parent/Guardian.

Communication

- Any concerns regarding the athlete should be communicated to the Program Coordinator who coordinates all aspects of homestay and athlete welfare.
 - All communication with the Program Coordinator should be conducted via email. Only call or text the Program Coordinator in the event of an emergency.
- In addition to keeping communication open between you and your athlete and between you and the Program Coordinator, ongoing and regular communication with the athlete's parents is vital.
- Communication with your athlete's parents should include mutual agreement and understanding around rules, parameters, discipline etc. expected in the host family's home.
- It is expected that host families will be empathetic but objective and play a significant role in supporting the athlete's emotional needs. Examples may include frustration from practice, team issues, homesickness etc. Any significant concerns regarding emotional wellness, should be brought to the attention of the program coordinator and head coach immediately.

Education

- It is a requirement for all program athletes that in addition to their volleyball commitments, athletes will continue their high school education remotely in coordination with their province and local school district.
- A Volleyball Canada Academic Advisor is in place to coordinate and support the athletes through their online studies.
- Host families should treat athletes as they would their own children in their academic expectations.
- Program expectations are that athletes do their best in every endeavour, including their studies.
- In addition to providing an appropriate space for athletes to study, it is a requirement for host families to provide Internet access to the athlete(s). The preference is for a Wi-Fi connection to allow the athlete to access the Internet in study and living spaces as well as their bedroom.

Meals

- An athlete's training schedule may impact mealtimes. Athletes are required to provide you with their weekly training schedules. The overall schedule should be fairly routine from week to week, but some days will have earlier or later starts and finishes.
- As a family, you would follow your normal routine for mealtime; however, enjoying regular meals together including your athlete is the preferred practice and is optimal for positive integration with the family.
- Due to the program workload of volleyball athletes, they will have very healthy appetites. You will be required to provide three nutritious meals a day as well as healthy snacks for the visiting athlete.
- Athletes should be capable of preparing their own breakfast and lunches; however, may require supervision to ensure they are providing themselves with good levels of sustenance. Some athletes may prefer to purchase their own food near the training facility (at their own expense); however, they should be encouraged to pack a healthier option, and this should always be available to them.
- The athletes will require a meal each evening. This meal should be generally prepared for the athletes; however, the athletes assisting to prepare a meal is considered a valuable life skill.



- If you are unable to provide groceries for a lunch, or require the athlete to source their own dinner, the Volleyball Canada meal per diem is \$15/lunch and \$25/dinner and should be paid to the athlete prior to the meal by the homestay family.
- Volleyball Canada will provide nutrition workshops with our Sport Dietitian for athletes and resources for host families.

Transport

- Athletes will receive a Public transport card, frequently reloaded by Volleyball Canada.
- Host families are responsible for ensuring athletes can travel home from the training venue to their billet's house following evening practices within a reasonable timeframe.
- Athletes and host families will work out specific details as pertains to their individual situations. Volleyball Canada will try with best efforts to provide each NEP athlete with a functional bike should the homestay family not have one available for their use. Car-pooling may be possible with other host families.

Medical

- All athletes must be enrolled with their province's medical plan. Volleyball Canada will also be providing additional medical insurance that covers the athlete should an injury or incident occur within the training environment.
- Host families are to confirm with the athlete's family any allergies and/or medical conditions.
- Volleyball Canada's Team Physician will conduct medical screens of all NEP athletes and will be a continued resource to the athletes throughout the duration of the program.
- If an athlete is going to be sick or absent from training the athlete is responsible for calling or texting the Head Coach. The athlete is also responsible for contacting their parents. They cannot resume training until they have been cleared by the Medical Coordinator.
- For emergency medical concerns, athletes are encouraged to speak with their homestay family in the first instance. The homestay parent and/or athlete will take appropriate action to support the athlete and then contact the Medical Coordinator.

Drug and Alcohol Use

- No illicit drugs may be provided to or used around any athlete.
- No prescription drugs may be provided to any athlete unless prescribed by medical personnel or family doctor
 - Athletes must take responsibility for ensuring the family doctor consults the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) website.
- Athletes are not to consume alcohol, cannabis, or smoke cigarettes at any time.

General Conduct and Consequences

- All homestay athletes are under the age of 18 so relevant laws apply.
- The athletes are all young and in need of structure and limits, guidance, friendship, and your acceptance.
- Host families assist the program by ensuring that each athlete complies with Volleyball Canada Policies and the Homestay Agreement. Host families may impose additional rules that apply to your home. Establish a set of guidelines early on so the athlete knows what is expected of them. The host parents should set rules and expectations for the athlete to follow while living in your home. Your athlete will be expected to respect the rules and expectations of your household.



- In the event there are issues that arise regarding a person other than the athlete that affects the athlete or living situation, please contact Volleyball Canada. Please do not discuss such matters with the athletes.
- While the homestay experience is, for the most part, a positive and enriching one, occasionally the situation will arise where the athlete/family match does not work out. Please contact Volleyball Canada with any concerns as soon as possible.
- Inappropriate behaviour in violation of Volleyball Canada Policies and the Homestay Agreement will be subject to review by the program staff and subject to appropriate discipline up to and including the athlete losing their place within the program and homestay status.

Homestay Fee

- Host families will receive \$900-\$950/athlete/month from September to December to help offset the costs of housing an athlete.
- The duration of the agreement will be included in the Homestay Agreement, but in general the National Excellence Program runs from September to December.
- Volleyball Canada will deposit payments by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) monthly directly to the homestay contact by mutual agreement. Deposits will be made on the 15th of each month.
- The athlete and his family are responsible for covering their own personal needs including any spending money/allowance, clothing, personal items, toiletries, and outings with friends, etc.
- It is expected that for family outings, such as dinner at a restaurant, that the host family will cover the cost of the meal.
- The cost of athlete outings, such as going to the movies (other similar recreation) are to be funded by the athlete. This includes transport, food, and entry costs.
- If the athletes choose to buy lunch instead of preparing a packed lunch or wish to buy additional 'junk-food' on occasions, this is at their own cost.

Periods of Host Absences

If a host family is planning to be away from the home, which will result in overnight absences, please notify the Program Coordinator who will help facilitate alternative arrangements. It is important that as much notice as possible is given.

Options for supervision of athletes for host absences are:

1. Athletes are relocated to another host family. Hosts to discuss payment or other arrangements including reciprocating when needed. If a payment is agreed this is to be made directly between families.
2. Parents and host family jointly agree for the athlete to remain unsupervised for a short period and appropriate emergency processes/contacts are in place. The Head Coach and Program Coordinator are to be notified in this case.
3. Alternate suitable supervision is arranged within the current homestay (ex. athlete parent, family friend (approved by the program) supervises).

Things the Host Family Does/Does Not Provide

- Essential Items – The purchase of any household essential items is the responsibility of the host family (i.e. shampoo/conditioner, soap, detergent, toilet paper etc...). If the athlete has specific needs in this area, it should be discussed prior between the homestay family and NEP parents.



- Non-Essential Items – The purchase of any non-essential items by the athlete is not the financial responsibility of the host family.
- Electronics – Host families are not required to provide televisions, telephones, stereos, computers, or any other electronics equipment for the athlete. If the family wishes to offer it for the athlete's use, that is appropriate, however, it is not required.

ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

While guests in host family homes, each athlete is to be well behaved and respect themselves, their teammates, and their environment.

Some key expectations of the homestay athletes are:

- Show gratitude to the host family for opening their home.
- Provide information to the host family regarding allergies, medical conditions, and special dietary needs.
- Respect the host family as they would their own parents.
- Respect the 'house rules' as determined between the host family and the athlete (and their family).
- Do all normal household shared chores as per any other member of the family.
- Know what is expected and acceptable in a host family's house.
- When unsure of anything, always ask.
- Be respectful of their new surroundings and recognise their guest status in the home.