

UVic Homestay Program Safe Arrival Protocols for Students

As we welcome international students back to UVic and Victoria, our top priority is the health and safety of our students, host families, campus and community. The UVic Homestay Program is obligated to follow the regulations and recommendations of the federal and the provincial governments, as well as the local public health authority.

The following priority requirements and considerations will be in effect regardless of which phase of BC's Restart Plan that the province is currently in:

- The UVic Homestay Program expects that students and homestays will familiarize themselves with [BC's Restart Plan](#), specifically how to keep transmission low:
 - ✓ Stay at home and keep a safe distance from family when you have cold or flu symptoms,
 - ✓ Continue to practice proper recommended hygiene guidelines,
 - ✓ Practice physical distancing when outside of the home, avoid malls, crowded spaces, etc.
- If a household member (including homestay students) were to contract COVID-19 or express associated symptoms (coughing, sneezing, fever, etc.) during the homestay contract period, the program will work with the student and host to follow public health guidelines.
 - ✓ The homestay shall direct the student to use a COVID-19 self assessment tool, by visiting <https://bc.thrive.health> or calling 8-1-1, connecting with Guard.me health insurance, and seeking medical attention, if necessary.
 - ✓ The UVic Homestay Program aims to avoid spreading COVID-19 with unnecessary relocations. Our preference is to keep the student in place, in accordance with Public Health direction.

Additional program rules and restrictions may be implemented without notice based on requirements implemented by UVic Health & Safety, the BC Government, the Canadian Government, and other governmental agencies.

If the BC Government assesses that the province is to return to a previous phase of BC's Restart Plan, the UVic Homestay Program services and requirements will match those as outlined by the government and hosts and students will be expected to follow those requirements depending on the phase as determined by the Province of BC.

Please note: Currently, fully vaccinated students (with a [Canada accepted COVID-19 vaccine](#)) may be exempt from quarantine upon arrival.

Students who are partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, or vaccinated with a different vaccine will need to quarantine upon arrival in Canada. UVic Homestay is not an option for quarantine upon arrival. Students that are required to quarantine upon arrival, will need to have a [self-isolation plan](#) that includes suitable accommodation outside of homestay.

Participants who breach UVic Homestay requirements as outlined below may have their homestay contract terminated and be removed from the program.

STUDENTS: PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Build your Relationship with your Homestay host – Best Practices

- Begin to communicate and build a relationship with your homestay prior to your departure.
- Have several Skype, FaceTime, or Zoom meetings to get to know one another. Exchange ideas about your hobbies, favourite foods, pets, families and more.
- If directed to self-isolate, discuss what quarantine will look like in their home, and be expected to follow their directions.
- Share how you have been living during the COVID-19 experience and the precautions taken in your country.
- Exchange emails and phone numbers and program into your mobile phone.

TIP! While you may be exempt from quarantining, it's a good idea to make a plan for your physical and emotional wellness during quarantine. Is there anything you can bring to help keep you busy and entertained?

Read the article: [How to quarantine \(self isolate\)](#) which is available in several languages.

Packing

The UVic Homestay Program encourages you to bring:

- 60 disposable face masks OR 30 disposable and 2 or more cloth face masks (that you should wash regularly)
- One large bottle of quality hand sanitizer
- A few disposable Nitrile gloves
- Thermometer to self monitor your temperature
- Art supplies and music, for activities during quarantine (should this be required)

In your carry-on luggage, also bring at least 2 masks, several pairs of gloves, a travel-sized bottle of hand-sanitizer and disinfecting wipes.

TRAVEL TO CANADA

Travelling

While in transit to the airport, in airports, and during the flight(s), a student must:

- wear a mask
- practice physical distancing (minimum 2 metres from others) when possible
- wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face
- use hand sanitizer regularly and as necessary, particularly before eating
- sanitize your personal space and high-touch areas (armrests, seat belts, tray tables, screens)
- minimize trips to the washroom
- touch as few surfaces as possible

- keep mobile phone charged if using throughout the flight to watch movies or play games, clean it with a disinfecting wipe frequently
- bring some food as restaurants or stores may be closed

TIP: Keep your cell phone charged in case you need to contact your host family with any flight delays and to notify them of your arrival and location at the airport for pick-up.

Students must also ensure they have the following documents ready in their carry-on luggage for when they arrive in Canada:

- Passport
- Official proof of vaccination documents
- Study permit or approval letter
- Letter of Acceptance
- Homestay Contract and contact information

Arrival – Best Practice

Your host will pick you up at the Victoria International Airport (YYJ) (or other approved arrival location) on the scheduled arrival day. Please read and review [“Flight Details and Arrival in Victoria”](#) document. *Be prepared to pay for a taxi or shuttle if arriving before 8:00am or after 10:00pm on weekends or on a weekday during typical work hours (8:30am-4:30pm).*

1. Once you have cleared customs at the port of entry into Canada, notify your host via text and continue your travel plans as scheduled.
2. Due to Covid-19, your host is not permitted to come into the Victoria International Airport. After collecting your baggage please send your host a message or give them a call. Wi-Fi connection info: <https://m.victoriaairport.com/services-and-facilities>
3. Collect your checked baggage.
4. Put on a fresh/new mask and wash/sanitize your hands.
5. Please prepare a sign with your host’s name on it to make it easier to identify each other at the pick-up location in the parking lot.
6. Students should sanitize their luggage before placing it into the homestay’s vehicle and/or bringing it into the home. Students are responsible for loading and unloading their belongings and luggage from the homestay’s vehicle, as well as moving belongings into the home.
7. Sit in the back seat on the passenger side of the vehicle as far from the host as possible.

Homestays and students are expected to follow appropriate physical distancing requirements throughout the arrival and move process. People should avoid common physical greetings and goodbyes such as handshakes and hugs.

When you arrive at your Homestay home – Best Practice

- Load your own luggage out of the car and into your room.
- Be prepared to remove your shoes prior to entering the home.
- Shower and change into fresh clothes immediately.
- Put your travel clothes in a plastic bag to be washed immediately and separately from other people’s laundry.

FULLY VACCINATED STUDENTS: Fully vaccinated students that receive a positive randomized arrival/COVID-19 test result, after they have moved into their homestay home, will be required to complete their quarantine in their current homestay.

What if my randomized arrival test comes back positive, after I have moved into my homestay?

Students that underwent randomized arrival testing will generally be contacted within 72 hours with a result, by which point they will already be living in the homestay home. If you test positive, you will be required to quarantine in your current homestay home for a period of up to 14 days from the testing date.

Students required to quarantine in homestay will need to pay an additional \$350 homestay quarantine fee for their quarantine period on top of the regular monthly homestay fee (\$950 monthly fee + \$350 quarantine fee).

If you receive a positive COVID-19 test result

The guidelines, protocols and expectations outlined below have been created to help keep the student, homestay family and community safe while the student quarantines. Quarantine can be a challenging and emotional time, so we encourage you to invest time in building a relationship with your host and clarifying expectations prior to your arrival in Victoria. Get to know each other better, and if anything, over-communicate!

Students that test positive for COVID-19 will self isolate in their homestay. If a student or family is diagnosed with COVID-19, our protocol is to keep the student in place, in accordance with Public Health direction.

Should self-isolation extend past the planned departure date, we will try to arrange for the student to stay in their current homestay. However, if this is not possible we will help them to find a hotel where they can isolate and help arrange for meals. Students will need to pay the additional costs of either \$32 per night plus a \$350 quarantine fee to their homestay family or as per the hotel and meal charges incurred.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the UVic Homestay Program.

While in Quarantine in Homestay

- Keep your room well-ventilated and clean – open your window to let the air circulate
- Practice good hygiene:
 - wash your hands frequently with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - use a separate towel which is kept away from others.
 - cover your mouth and nose with your elbow (or use a tissue) when coughing or sneezing – avoid coughing into either your hands or into the air. Dispose of used tissues right away into a trash bin and immediately wash your hands.
- Use a separate bathroom if possible:
 - Clean and disinfect the bathroom with products provided after each use (frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, dressers, and other surfaces).
 - Flush the toilet with the lid down
 - Keep personal items (toothbrush, cups, cell phone, tablets, laptops, etc.) separate from those belonging to others
 - Package up your garbage. Empty garbage frequently and wash your hands immediately.
- Hosts and students will wear a mask (and may opt for gloves and face shield) and practice social distancing while the student is in quarantine in their home.
- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces after use.
- Find some time to go outside each day only if you can stay in a private place like the back yard. Do not visit the UVic campus, shared spaces, or public areas.
- Eat in your room. Your Host will continue to provide food for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks while you are in quarantine.
- Stay connected with Wi-Fi connection using text, email, FaceTime and be creative to find ways to interact with your homestay family as well as friends and family back home.
- Monitor your physical and mental well-being:
 - If you are not feeling well, complete an [online self-assessment](#) to determine if you need further assessment or testing
 - Self-monitor and check for [symptoms](#)
 - Establish a 'routine' as quickly as possible (don't stay awake all night and sleep all day)

TIP! We know your room will be where you will be spending most of the time, so we encourage you to bring something you like to pass the time. Bring books, and before you get on your flight to come to Victoria, make sure you download movies, your favourite shows and music in your laptop/cell/hard-drive as not all the same shows that are available in your home country may be available in Canada. If watching shows at odd hours because you are jetlagged, make sure you use your headphones or earplugs.

After Self-Isolation

After your 14 days in quarantine and for the duration of your stay in Canada, please be mindful of and respect public health directives. E.g. physical distancing, hand washing, etc.

TRAVEL RESTRICTION while in UVIC HOMESTAY

Students participating in UVic Homestay are **STRONGLY ADVISED AGAINST** travelling internationally due to the constantly developing restrictions, potential border closures, quarantine expectations, and other health and safety concerns.

For information on current travel restrictions and rules, visit: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/exemptions>

If students decide to travel, against current UVic Homestay policies, they will be required to:

1. take all their belongings with them,
2. quarantine in Canada outside of homestay for 10 days following travel abroad (at student's own expense), and
3. show a negative COVID test before returning to the homestay home.

More importantly, and depending on host comfort level, availability and travel advisories, the homestay placement may be terminated altogether and another placement will not be guaranteed.