UVic Homestay Program Safe Arrival Protocols for Students

Earlier this year, the University of Victoria confirmed its plans to return to on-campus classes in September. 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.

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

IMPORTANT: Students required to quarantine upon arrival by the Canada Border Services Agency are responsible for any costs/fees while at a government-authorized hotel*. Once allowed to leave the hotel, students required to quarantine will need to pay an additional $350 quarantine fee for the remainder of their quarantine period on top of the regular monthly homestay fee during the first month. For these students, the first month’s fee would be $1,300 ($950 monthly fee + $350 quarantine fee), plus the $300 application fee. Subsequent months would be $950/month.
*As of August 9, 2021, the three-night government-authorized hotel stay requirement for all travellers arriving by air will be eliminated.

**STUDENTS: PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION**

**Build your Relationship with your Homestay host**

- 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.
- 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!** 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
- Box of Nitrile gloves
- Thermometer to self monitor your temperature
- Art supplies and music, for activities during quarantine

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
• Study permit or approval letter
• Letter of Acceptance
• Homestay Contract and contact information

Arrival

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 (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver or Calgary), immediately notify your host if you have NOT been exempt from quarantine. If quarantine is required, you will need to check-in at a government-approved hotel for the next 3 nights. Notify your host of your new travel plans and flight itinerary. If you have been exempt, notify your host via text and continue your travel plans as scheduled. Please note that as of August 9, 2021, the three-night government-authorized hotel stay requirement for all travellers arriving by air will be eliminated.
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.
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

• 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.

Quarantine (Self-Isolation) Plan

As of July 6, 2021, the Government of Canada will be implementing changes to the quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated travelers to Canada. Students that meet all requirements may be exempt from having to quarantine/self-isolate after arriving. It is up to the Canadian Border Services Agent to waive or implement the quarantine requirement based on the information provided by the individual student. All students must present a quarantine plan, regardless of vaccination status, in case an officer deems you not eligible for the exemption.

While in Quarantine

• Keep your room well-ventilated and clean – open your window to let the air circulate
• Practice good hygiene:
  o wash your hands frequently with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  o use a separate towel which is kept away from others.
  o 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:
  o Clean and disinfect the bathroom with products provided after each use (frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, dressers, and other surfaces).
  o Flush the toilet with the lid down
  o Keep personal items (toothbrush, cups, cell phone, tablets, laptops, etc.) separate from those belonging to others
  o Package up your garbage. Empty garbage frequently and wash your hands immediately.
• 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 bring your meals to your room. Once finished, please leave the dirty dishes outside your door. Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils.
• You will need to wash and fold your own laundry and your clothes should be washed separately from other people’s laundry.
• 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:
  o If you are not feeling well, ask your host to help you complete an online self-assessment to determine if you need further assessment or testing
  o Use the daily self-monitoring website if needed at https://ca.thrive.health
  o 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.

**Students are reminded that, unless exempt, quarantine (self-isolation) is a requirement of the Quarantine Act and is not optional.**

**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.

You are now able to explore Victoria and get to know your homestay family better!