



SAN MATEO
COLLEGES
of Silicon Valley

Handbook for International Students

HOMESTAY REFERRAL PROGRAM

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International Housing Staff

Chikako Walker, Director of International Education: walkerchikako@smccd.edu



Chikako Walker is the Acting Director of International Education for the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD). In this role, she works closely with the international education teams at all three colleges on key areas such as student recruitment, admissions, support services and program development. She is also responsible for overseeing the district's Homestay Referral Program. Originally from Japan, Chikako has more than 15 years of professional experience in the field of International Education. Prior to joining SMCCCD, she served in a variety of roles at higher education institutions in the U.S., Australia and Japan. Chikako holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Waseda University, Japan, and a Master of Arts degree in International Education from New York University, U.S.

Julnar Msalam, Housing Program Coordinator: housingcoordinator@smccd.edu



As an International Student Housing Program Coordinator for the three colleges in the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD), Julnar is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with host families throughout the community. She supervises the general housing inquiries, recruits new families, approves home visits, processes background checks, manages the homestay database, initiates' homestay referrals, and matches students with compatible host families. Julnar has worked in the Counseling and Transfer Department, as well as helping students in the Associate's to Bachelor program for six years. Julnar has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from the University of Jerash in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Jia Chuan Lu, International Program Specialist: housingcoordinator@smccd.edu



Jia Chuan Lu is the International Education Program Specialist for the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD). He assists with the coordination and implementation of the District Homestay Referral Program. He is a highly motivated and experienced professional who is committed to helping international students succeed and thrive during their time at college. He has a deep understanding of unique challenges faced by international students, and he is dedicated to providing them with the guidance, support, and resources they need to succeed academically and personally. He earned a bachelor degree in Business Administration from UC Berkeley, Haas School of Business.

Housing Options & Costs

Option 1: Private room with meals: \$1,775/month

This option is for students who desire a private room and 2 meals every day. The family will provide the student with a hot dinner and breakfast items, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their own lunch.

Option 2: Private room without meals: \$1,275/month

This option is for students who desire a private room but choose to take care of all their own meals. The host family will provide the student access to the kitchen for cooking, with cabinet and refrigerator space to store food.

Option 3: Shared Room with meals: \$1,375/month

This option is for students who desire a shared room with another international student of the same gender, and 2 meals every day. The family will provide the student with a hot dinner and breakfast items, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their own lunch. A second student to share the room is ***never guaranteed*** with this option.

Option 4: Shared Room without meals: \$875/month

This option is for students who desire a shared room with another international student of the same gender, but choose to take care of all their own meals. The host family will provide the student access to the kitchen for cooking, with cabinet and refrigerator space to store food. A second student to share the room is ***never guaranteed*** with this option.

Homestay Program Policies

Placement and Change Fees:

Students must pay a **\$300** application Placement Fee to be matched with a host family. Prior to the completion of the initial two months, they must stay with the same host family unless they are requesting to leave due to any of the valid reasons stated below.

Valid reasons for placing a student at a new homestay without charging a fee are:

- 1) There is a real or implied threat of harm towards the student.
- 2) The student's bedroom is not as pictured or described in the host's profile.
- 3) The host family alters the terms of the original homestay agreement (Example: A family stops providing meals for their student, or increases the rent.)
- 4) The host family is unable to continue hosting the student due to personal reasons not caused by the student.

Unless they have one of the valid reasons listed above, students will be charged a **\$100** Change Fee each time they wish to change their homestay placement after the initial two months. There is no fee if students want to continue living with the same host family.

Rent:

The Homestay Referral Program does not manage or negotiate rental payments; it is strictly between the host and the student. On the first day of moving in, students must pay the host two months' rent, according to their homestay option, plus a refundable security deposit of \$500. After the first two months, students can request to move out (with a 30-day written notice) or continue living with the same host, but paying rent on a monthly basis.

Students who decide to move out prior to the completion of two months will not get a refund of the prepaid two months' rent. However, extreme situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. At any time during their participation in the Homestay Referral Program, if a student is asked to move out because they have broken a house rule after repeated warnings, the remainder of that month's rent will not be refunded.

However, if the host asks the student to move out, and the student has not broken any house rules, the host must refund the student any unused prepaid rent. The refund amount must be given to the student the day that they move out. In both cases, the security deposit will be calculated according to the policy outlined in the next section.

In case of a shared room, if a student's roommate decides to move out, they will continue to pay the same rental rate while the Homestay Referral Program works on finding another student to be matched with the host family. If the host is unable to accommodate this, they must give the student a 30-day eviction notice.

Security Deposit:

If the student chooses to move out of their homestay early and does not provide the host family with 30-day written notice, the student may risk losing some or all of their \$500 security deposit, if the funds are needed to pay any rent left owing.

The student is expected to leave their room in the same condition as when they moved in, except for normal wear and tear. The student may be held responsible for any damages caused by visitors (friends and family) that they have invited into the home, and funds from the security deposit can be used to repair such damages.

After a student moves out, the host family has 30 days to either return the deposit, or give a written statement of why all or part of the money is being kept. If a student moves out early, the host family may keep part or all of the security deposit to pay rent that would be due. If any funds are used for cleaning or repairs the family will provide the student with receipts showing the cost of services or repairs performed.

Moving Out:

If your host family asks you to move out of their home, they must give you a 30-day notice by completing the “Move-Out Notification Form,” which is available on the [Housing webpage](#).

Students may be asked to move out for various reasons, including but not limited to; not following house rules, not paying rent on time, ongoing conflicts with the host family, inappropriate behavior, and damage to people or property.

Additional Fees:

As long as the host is participating in the Program, even after the initial two months, they must honor the rental rate set by the Program. In addition, they may not charge the student additional fees for utilities and internet.

Students are responsible for purchasing their own snacks, no matter what their housing option is. For options 1 and 3, they should be provided food for breakfast and dinner every day, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their lunch.

Some host families offer the following services for an additional fee. The fees are separate from the Homestay Fees and should be negotiated between the student and the host. The host can choose not to charge the student for any of the services listed. However, if the host requires compensation for these **optional** fees, the student may request to be matched with another host. In that case, the host must refund the \$500 deposit and any unused prepared rent.

1. **Cleaning Fee:** the host can hire a professional to occasionally clean the house, including the student’s bedroom and bathroom. The host can split this expense with the student.
2. **Lunch Fee:** if the student does not want to prepare their own lunch, they can ask the host to provide them with lunch for a fee that will not exceed \$10/meal.

3. **Driving Fee:** most hosts will occasionally provide free rides to the grocery store, movie theater, school, etc. However, a payment plan can be developed if the student wants a ride to school every day, or to be driven to far destinations.

What is Provided:

Per the SMCCCD homestay agreement, host families must provide a room that is furnished with a bed, linens, chest of drawers, desk, chair, closet and window. For shared rooms, two beds and desks must comfortably fit in the room and there is enough closet space for two students. Internet and utilities are included in the rental agreement and no additional bills should be charged to the student for payment.

It is expected that the students respects the facilities in the home and follow the host's rules for the space in the home. If a student uses the house phone for long distance calls, they will pay for them. San Mateo County Community College District does not recommend that the student be allowed to make long distance calls on the family phone bill.

In addition to the bathroom and kitchen access, students will have access to the laundry room to wash their clothes. The student should provide their own laundry soap and not use the hosts' detergent unless instructed by the host family. If the host family does not have a washer and dryer in unit, they must provide the student with money to wash their clothes at a laundromat. Students are also responsible for purchasing their own personal hygiene products like deodorant, shampoo, razor, etc.

Holiday and Semester Breaks:

Students who plan to leave for an extended period of time during the holiday or semester breaks must inform the host family whether they plan to return to live in their homestay or not. If the student would like to continue living with the host family, the student will continue to pay the required rent during their absence to remain in the room.

If the student is not returning to the same homestay after the semester break and the remaining rent does not cover the days when they are away, they may not store their belongings there. Some host families may offer storage space for a fee, but this should be discussed and negotiated between the student and the host.

If the host is traveling for an extended period of time, they must ensure the student will still get two meals a day. If the student is under 18 years old, the host must inform the Housing Program Coordinator in advance and provide the contact information of an adult who will be checking in on the minor student. The host cannot leave the minor student unsupervised.

House Rules and Federal Law:

During the first week of arrival, we encourage host families to go over house rules and expectations with the student. If the student repeatedly breaks the house rules, the host family can evict them from their house. That will disqualify the student from being in our Homestay Program and they will be responsible for finding accommodation on their own.

Students must obey local, state and federal law. Drinking alcohol and smoking are prohibited until age 21. Smoking is not allowed in most homes. Illegal drugs are prohibited for persons of any age and students should not be associated with anyone involved with illegal drugs in any way.

Although California has legalized marijuana, it is still illegal to buy, smoke, or grow marijuana under federal law in the United States. The F1 Visa is a federal visa so international students must adhere to federal laws at all times. If a student is caught smoking marijuana (even if they have a medical marijuana card), their F1 visa status could be revoked and they could be expelled from their program of study.

Public Transportation:

Our homestay referral program requires that each family lives within a 60-minute bus ride to the college (including transfers, and walk to bus stop). The host must teach the student how to buy a bus pass and show them where the closest bus stop is located. If it takes longer than 60 minutes to commute to school by bus, students should notify the Homestay Program Coordinator immediately so they can be relocated, free of charge.

The student is responsible for purchasing their own bus fare or “clipper card” for public transportation. It is the students’ responsibility to determine their own transportation schedule and plan accordingly when needing to commute to class, campus, or other locations. If a host decides to provide transportation to and from a location, that service is voluntary and not required by our program.

Communication:

Students should directly communicate with the host family their move-in and move-out dates. They should also notify the host if they do not plan to be home for a certain period of time, especially if they have chosen a homestay option with a meal plan. It’s better to ask the host to clarify what the house rules are than to unintentionally break them and be asked to move out.

Misunderstandings happen due to language barrier, cultural differences, or lack of communication. It is important for students to directly communicate with their host family if they are concerned or unhappy about something. If it’s a serious situation, students should immediately inform the staff members of the Homestay Referral Program so they may intervene and offer assistance.

Privacy laws and Liability Release Form:

As an institution, we uphold the regulations by the U.S. Department of Education to implement the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for each student who applies to our homestay referral program. Under FERPA, a school may not generally disclose personal, identifiable information from an eligible student's education records to a third party unless the eligible student has provided written consent.

Students under the age of 18 and their parent(s) must sign a liability release form to be in our program. The release form specifically states that the parent(s) acknowledge that their child is under the age of eighteen (legal adult status in the United States), and that they - not the host family, nor San Mateo

County Community College District - San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley – will be held responsible for their child’s actions while the student lives in the United States. The parent(s) agree to pay the full amount for any and all damages in the homestay for which their child is responsible, regardless of whether the damages were accidental. The parent(s) also agree to release all liabilities for any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay or expense resulting from participation in the homestay program.

Opening a Bank Account

At the time of admission, all international (F-1 Visa) students are required by federal law to document adequate funding for study. We expect that all students will have sufficient funds for tuition, fees, books, health insurance, living expenses and other miscellaneous costs. We recommend that all students open a checking account at a local bank or financial institution. When opening a bank account, the student will need to bring:

- 2 forms of Identification:
 - Passport
 - U.S. driver's license or college campus identification card
- SEVIS Form I-20 and;
- Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record;
- Enrollment verification letter from the school or a letter from the homestay program

Once students have a U.S. bank account number, they will be able to send the information to their home bank in order to make transferring money easier and faster. It's also a good idea for students to inform their parents or relatives about the transfer options.

Banks near CSM

Citi Bank

11 E 3rd Ave
San Mateo, CA 94401

Monterra Credit Union

1515 South El Camino Real
San Mateo, CA 94402

Wells Fargo Bank

112 De Anza Blvd, Unit A
San Mateo, CA 94402

Chase

3590 South El Camino Real
San Mateo, CA 94403

Banks near Skyline College

U.S. Bank

1300 El Camino Real
San Bruno, CA 94066

Chase

1200 El Camino Real
San Bruno, CA 94066

Bank of America

955 El Camino Real
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Chase

2248 Westborough Blvd
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Wells Fargo Bank

10 Chestnut Ave
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Banks near Cañada College

Citi Bank

1073 El Camino Real
Redwood City, CA 94063

Bank of America

700 Jefferson Avenue
Redwood City, CA 94063

Wells Fargo Bank

2099 Broadway St
Redwood City, CA 94063

U.S. Bank

1475 Woodside Rd
Redwood City, CA 94061

Chase

1001 El Camino Real
Redwood City, CA 94063

Crisis Support & Prevention Resources

Education & Prevention: Recognizing and Preventing a Crisis

A crisis can happen to anyone, and it may look different for each person. It is important to understand that support is available and that early awareness can help prevent situations from becoming more serious.

Some situations that may lead to a crisis include:

- Health issues
- Experiencing abuse
- Substance use or abuse
- Divorce or relationship breakups
- Struggles with identity, gender, or sexual orientation
- Bullying
- Grief or loss
- Loss of a job
- Financial stress
- Housing instability
- Chronic pain

If you notice that a student or someone in your household may be struggling, offering support and connecting them with available resources can make a meaningful difference. Please reach out to the SMCCCD homestay program for additional resources.

San Mateo County Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

San Mateo County has partnered with Telecare to provide non-law enforcement crisis intervention services to community members. The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) delivers rapid, in-person support through trained mental health professionals. Law enforcement is only involved when necessary.

This service provides support in a way that is safe, accessible, and compassionate. The goal is to help individuals receive the care they need while reducing stigma, fear, unnecessary emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and law enforcement involvement.

For more information:

<https://www.telecarecorp.com/san-mateo-county-mcrt>

CARES Report Information for Each College

If you are concerned about a student's well-being, you may submit a CARES report through the student's college. CARES reports help connect students with appropriate support services and resources.

Skyline College CARES Report

<https://skylinecollege.edu/cares/>

Cañada College CARES Report

<https://canadacollege.edu/cares/filereport.php>

College of San Mateo CARES Report

<https://collegeofsanmateo.edu/cares/report-form.asp>

If you are unsure which college a student attends, please contact the SMCCCD Homestay Program for assistance.

Important: CARES reports are for non-emergency situations. If there is immediate danger, please call 911.

Transportation

San Mateo County Transit Bus (SamTrans)

SamTrans provides bus services along several routes to our college campus.



2 bus routes to College of San Mateo:

- **Route 250** - Connects CSM to **Hillsdale Shopping Center, Downtown San Mateo, and San Mateo Caltrain Station**.
- **Route CSM** - Offers a **direct connection between CSM and the San Mateo Caltrain Station**, operating on weekdays.
- **Way2Go** – SparkPoint Way2Go Bus Pass: Free, unlimited SamTrans rides on any route when using a Clipper Card. Eligible for students enrolled in at least one unit at CSM, Cañada, or Skyline. Apply via the SparkPoint Way2Go Application Form (first-come, first-served)
- **Ride Plus** – SamTrans On-Demand Shared Van Service: App-based service connecting beyond fixed-route areas. Vans serve up to 7 passengers plus 1 wheelchair (or 10 passengers depending on vehicle), and connect with SamTrans bus routes. Fares match standard SamTrans rates (Clipper, cash, passes); includes free 2-hour bus transfers via Clipper or SamTrans app.

2 bus routes to Cañada College:

- **Route 78** - Links **Redwood City Transit Center and Caltrain Station** to Cañada College.
- **Route 278** - Connects Cañada College to **East Palo Alto and Menlo Park**.

3 bus routes to Skyline College:

- **Route 121** - Connects **Daly City BART Station and South San Francisco BART Station** to Skyline College.
- **Route 141** - Links **San Bruno BART Station and San Bruno Caltrain Station** to Skyline College.
- **Route SKY** - Provides a **direct connection from Daly City BART Station to Skyline College**.

Routing information is available at 1-800-660-4287, www.samtrans.com, and 511.org.

Bay Area Rapid Transit Train (BART)



BART is a public transportation system serving the San Francisco Bay Area. The rapid transit elevated and subway system connects San Francisco with cities in the East Bay and the northern portion of San Mateo County. BART's rapid transit system operates 5 routes on 104 miles of track, with 44 stations in 4 counties, which are Alameda County, Contra Costa County, City and County of San Francisco, and San Mateo County. BART connects to Daly City, Colma, and San Bruno. For more information, visit www.bart.gov.

California Commuter Rail Line (CalTrain)

Caltrain provides commuter rail service along the San Francisco Peninsula, through the South Bay to San Jose and Gilroy. The San Francisco and San Jose Railroad Company began passenger rail service on the Peninsula in 1863. The system we know today as Caltrain had its start in 1992, when the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board took over the operation of the train. For more information, visit www.caltrain.com.



Campus Shuttle Services

College of San Mateo (CSM) Shuttle Services:

The free CSM Shuttle operates Monday–Friday, except SMCCCD observed holidays and breaks.

Shuttle #1 – Millbrae BART / Hillsdale Caltrain / CSM

Stops include:

- Millbrae BART
- Hillsdale Caltrain Station
- CSM Athletic Center (Building 5 – Health & Wellness)

Shuttle #2 – Hayward BART / Half Moon Bay / CSM

Stops include:

- Hayward BART Station
- Half Moon Bay (Kelly Ave & Church St, near CSM Coastside)
- CSM Athletic Center (Building 5 – Health & Wellness)

For a full route schedule and the latest details, visit our [CSM Shuttle](#) page.

Skyline College Shuttle Services:

The Skyline College Express Shuttle operates Monday–Friday during Fall and Spring Terms, and Monday–Thursday during Summer Term, except SMCCCD observed holidays and breaks.

Stops include:

- Daly City BART Station
- SKY Building 3 (South)
- SKY Building 4 (North)

For a full route schedule and the latest details, visit our [SKY Shuttle](#) page.

Clipper

The all-in-one transit card that keeps track of any passes, discount tickets, ride books and cash value that you load onto it. Used for travel on SamTrans and Caltrain. Our office recommends that students learn about the benefits of using a clipper card for any of their public transportation needs. For more information on obtaining a card please visit www.clippercard.com



California Driver's License

Students must have a California Driver's License to drive in the State of California. New student will need to wait at least 10 days after entering the United States before applying for CA driver's license and the student's SEVIS record must be registered by the college administrator before applying as well. The 10-day waiting period allows time for all the government databases to be updated with student arrival information. If applying prior to 10 days, the application may be denied or delayed. The DMV will require proof of birth date and legal status when applying for a driver's license.



Students should be prepared to show the following documents:

- Form I-20
- Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record –To access the electronic form students need to go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/home> and print a copy.
- Passport with visa (if applicable)
- Students do not need a social security number to apply for a California driver's license. However, if requested to show a social security card, students will need to get a letter from the Social Security office verifying that the student is not eligible for a social security number. For more information on obtaining a California Driver's License, please visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) website www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv.

The international student centers on each college campus can also provide students with further detailed information.

Cañada College

International Student Center

4200 Farm Hill Boulevard, Building 9, Room 163
Redwood City, CA 94061

Phone: 650-381-3544

Email: caninternational@smccd.edu

Fax: 650-381-3518

Web: www.canadacollege.edu/international

College of San Mateo

Center for Global Engagement

1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd, Building 10, Room 381
San Mateo, CA 94402

Phone: 650-574-6525

Email: csminternational@smccd.edu

Fax: 650-574-6166

Web: www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/international

Skyline College

International Student Program

3300 College Drive, Building 4, Room 252
San Bruno, CA 94066

Phone: 650-738-4430

Email: skyinternational@smccd.edu

Fax: 650-738-7140

Web: www.skylinecollege.edu/international



International Education Homestay Referral Program

3401 CSM Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402
United States

Phone: (650) 358-6856

Email: housingcoordinator@smccd.edu

Website: smccd.edu/international/housing/index.php

