



Oblate Youth Australia

HOME-STAY, BILLETING AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

(July, 2015)

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1. CONTEXT

With the increasing number of national events for Catholic Youth Ministry in Australia and within our own Oblate Youth Australia network, it has become necessary for a policy to be established to prescribe the procedures by which a home-stay, billeting, school accommodation or parish accommodation scenario will take place.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are:

- 1) To prescribe the procedure by which all home-stay accommodation and accommodation at other venues will be conducted during official Oblate Youth

events and events at which Oblate Youth Australia, as a collective entity, will be attending.

- 2) To outline the key roles and responsibilities of the people involved and how they will conduct themselves during the accommodation period.
- 3) To detail the process by which host venues and host families will be selected, monitored and facilitated during the period of accommodation.
- 4) To reduce any risk of danger or mismanagement that may harm any individual involved in the operation.
- 5) To enable collaboration between different Oblate communities and the wider Catholic Church in Australia to promote a functional and service-centred philosophy.
- 6) To ensure the safety of each individual, especially children involved; and to increase the facility, flexibility and enjoyment of the event at which the Oblate Youth are attending.

3. DEFINITIONS

Billeting

The process whereby homes and families are selected to host a group of individuals for a certain period of time, free of charge, in order to facilitate accommodation of a large group of people who are attending a certain event together.

Home-stay

For the purposes of this document, home-stay refers to the billeting program set up by Oblate Youth Australia through its schools and parishes in order to facilitate the accommodation of its participants who are attending a national event together in a city of which not all of them live.

Host

A host will refer to the person responsible and property owner of the house in which the participants will stay as a part of the home-stay program.

Local Stay Coordinator/s

A person nominated by Oblate Youth Australia to coordinate the home-stay program on a local level. They will reside in the city of the respective event and will be able to coordinate all local matters in conjunction with the parish priest/school principal and the Local Stay Home Visit Team.

National Event

An event hosted on a national level, which will draw participants in from all areas of the country, e.g. Australian Catholic Youth Festival, Australian Catholic Youth Ministry Convention, National Oblate Youth Encounter, Re-Encounter, etc.

Oblate Youth Australia

The organisation of young people who associate with the charism of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The organisation solely responsible for coordinating the home-stay of its members when attending a national event. The organisation responsible for the writing and implementation of this policy.

Other Venues

For the purposes of this document, other venues will be those chosen to host participants other than a standard family home, e.g. a parish or school hall.

Parish Accommodation

Accommodation organised through a parish whereby participants will stay collectively in a parish venue, e.g. a hall.

Pilgrim

A member of Oblate Youth Australia who has decided to be a participant at a national event, where a home-stay program has been implemented. The terms pilgrim, member and participant will be used synonymously in this document.

School Accommodation

Accommodation organised through a school whereby participants will stay collectively in a school venue, e.g. classrooms or a gymnasium.

Screening

Appropriate processes such as child protection checks that will be used to determine the quality of the home and the suitability of the host for the purposes of the home-stay program and if the host is suitable for working with persons under the age of eighteen.

4. KEY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Oblate Youth Office

The accommodation programs directed by this policy will be managed and coordinated primarily from the National Oblate Youth Office. The National Director and National Projects Officer will coordinate the process and will observe the following functions:

- i) Identify host parishes or alternative accommodation.
- ii) Liaise with parish priests/venue hosts.
- iii) Collate information of local home-stay hosts.
- iv) Ensure occupational health and safety standards and child protection practices are known to all participants and hosts and are followed to ensure safety of all.
- v) Train and facilitate the local home-stay visit team in their functions of inspecting local homes and informing local home-stay hosts of all necessary information.

- vi) Liaise with local festival hosts about information pertaining to the event for which the home-stay or alternative accommodation has been organised.

Home-stay Coordinators

The local accommodation, even the home-stay hosts will be based through a local parish. Each parish will have a local home-stay coordinator appointed by the Oblate Youth Office, in conjunction with the advice of the parish priests. The home-stay coordinators will observe the following functions:

- i) Assist in the collection and collation of information from the prospective home-stay hosts,
- ii) Liaise with home-stay hosts about information concerning the period of accommodation, their duties as hosts, the schedule for the home-stay, OH&S standards, child protection standards and other information as required.
- iii) Coordinate the local home-stay visit team in order to inspect the homes of the prospective hosts, obtain all necessary information from the hosts, inform them of all safety and child protective standards, and other information as required.

Parish Priests

The involvement and support of the parish priests is essential for a smooth operation and coordination of the home-stay program. Priests will be consulted in order to nominate a local home-stay coordinator and they will work closely with them to recruit home-stay hosts from the local parish communities.

Home-stay Hosts

The Local home-stay hosts will be required to welcome a minimum of two individuals into their home for a defined period of time and provide them with accommodation during a national event at which Oblate Youth Australia is attending collectively. They will be responsible for providing reasonable and comfortable bedding arrangements and bathroom facilities to the individuals hosted in their homes. If possible, they will also provide transport to/from the local parish each morning and evening to facilitate in getting all participants to and from the national event. Hosts will be expected to adhere to duty of care for the participants staying in their homes. All hosts will also be expected to undergo screening and to obtain a federal catholic police check.

School or Parish Hosts

In the case that home-stays are not available and individuals will need to stay together in a school or parish hall then the responsibility for coordination of that stay will be the National Oblate Youth Coordinators in conjunction with the proprietors of the premises, e.g. the parish priest or school principal. Thus, safety regulations, child protection, duty of care and all other coordinator duties will fall to National Oblate Youth Coordinators and Priest or Principal.

Local Home-stay Visit Team

The National Oblate Youth Office will coordinate a group of volunteers in the local host community to carry out home visits over an estimated 4 week period prior to the organised home-stay program. This group is essential for the mitigation of risk of harm or misconduct during the home-stay visit. The home-stay visit team will be trained and coordinated by the National Oblate Youth Office. They will be responsible for:

- i) Appropriately assessing that each home is suitable for a home-stay.
- ii) Ensuring that home-stay hosts are properly accredited with police checks/working with children checks
- iii) Ensuring that hosts are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the Home-stay Program.
- iv) Collating information about home-stay hosts for use by the National Oblate Youth Office.
- v) Any other tasks required by the National Oblate Youth Office on a local level prior to the home-stay program.

5. HOST FAMILY RECRUITMENT PROCESS

If you have been approached and invited by a parish priest or delegate, the following recruitment policies need not be followed – **5.1, 5.3 & 5.4.**

5.1 Registration

One of the most significant parts of the role of the home-stay coordinators and the Parish Priests is to attract and recruit applicants as potential home-stay hosts. Advertisements for applications to be a home-stay host will be distributed around the parish or local home-stay area. The local home-stay coordinator and parish priests, using their prior knowledge, may approach certain families they know would be interested and capable of such an activity. The advertisements will allow for an option to apply either on a paper form or electronically through an internet-based system administered by the National Oblate Youth Office. Applicants will be asked for information regarding capacity of their home, contact details, transport arrangements, police checks, etc. Applicants will also be asked if they are able to host pilgrims with disabilities or special needs.

The period of accommodation will be set out in the advertisement and in the application forms. Once the applicants have applied, their applications will be processed by the local home-stay coordinator and the National Oblate Youth Office. The applications will then act as a list of homes which the local home-stay visit team will then assess prior to any agreement being made regarding the hosting of pilgrims.

5.2 Agreement

A formal agreement between Oblate Youth Australia and the home-stay host will need to be in place. The conditions envisaged in the agreement include:

- Access arrangements for the pilgrim to the property (e.g. transport by host family, etc.);
- Compliance with building regulations (e.g. smoke detectors in all main rooms and sleeping rooms);
- Appropriate insurances in place (contents insurance which includes liability insurance);
- Declaration that this is in a voluntary capacity and that the host family will not receive any monetary compensation for the service they are providing the pilgrim; and
- Consent to undergo a criminal police records check, in addition to a declaration that they have no convictions and should there be an incident at any stage between the time of agreement and the end of the agreement, the host party will inform the National Oblate Youth Office immediately.

5.3 Initial Screening

Once the applicant has registered their interest, they will be notified by email of the next steps.

The purpose of the phone screening will be to confirm and clarify information provided on the registration form and to ask questions regarding motivations for being a Host Family. These phone calls will be conducted by the local home-stay coordinator and the National Oblate Youth Office.

At the completion of the Screening, the phone caller will arrange an appointment for a home visit. This appointment needs to be during the 4 week period prior to the home-stay when the local home-stay visit team is operational. Results of the screening process will be accurately documented and stored in the records of Oblate Youth Australia.

5.4 Email

If the phone screener is satisfied with the applicant and has decided that they should progress, an email will be sent to the applicant. If the applicant does not have email access, they will be sent a hard copy letter. This email/letter has a number of important purposes:

- i) To confirm the appointment time of the local home visit for inspection.
- ii) It will include a copy checklist (Refer to Appendix 3) or a hard copy of the checklist that will be used by the home visitor. This will help the applicant prepare their home for the visit;
- iii) It will include a copy of the Code of Conduct which they will need to sign and have collected by the local home-stay visit team(Refer to Appendix 1); and
- iv) Information about obtaining a Catholic Police Check and/or Working With Children Check if they don't already possess these.

If the National Oblate Youth Office decides that an applicant should not proceed, they will inform the applicant of the decision. The reason for not proceeding must be valid and will be explained to the applicant clearly.

5.5 Home Visit

The local home-stay coordinator will manage the local home-stay visit team which will be a collection of volunteers from Oblate Youth Australia and the local parishes/schools involved in the hosting of pilgrims.

The home-stay coordinator and the volunteers will arrange appointment times with the host applicants at the conclusion of their phone screening. The home visits will occur over a four week period. The visits will be carried out by the local home-stay visit team at the arranged time. Each visit will be carried out in accordance with the specified process and checklist that each home visitor will have and be trained in using effectively.

To satisfy the home visit, host applicants will need to show a safe, comfortable and healthy home, access to transport, compliance with safety regulations, and all necessary child protection checks.

The home-stay host will also be asked if they are able to accommodate a pilgrim with a disability and to what level.

With all hosts receiving the checklist and information about obtaining police checks prior to the home visit, the hope is that all considerations will be satisfied and the local home-stay visit team can provide them with the necessary information about the logistics of the national event and the arrival of the pilgrims.

If the home visit is unsuccessful then the local home-stay visit team is only required to thank the host applicant for their time and inform that they will hear from the local home-stay coordinator about the result of their application.

Regardless of their completion of the home visit, all applicants will receive an email/letter detailing whether they have been successful or unsuccessful in satisfying the criteria of the home visit.

If successful, the National Oblate Youth Office will prepare all necessary information for the successful hosts and they will receive this information promptly through email or post.

5.6 Police Record Checks

As a major part of the Risk Management Strategy, it has been decided that in order to be selected as a local stay host family, the individuals residing in that residence must consent to undergo a National Police Check and obtain any other Child Protection Checks as required by the law of their respective state or territory. The police check will identify any prior convictions, however, a recorded conviction will not automatically determine the outcome of an application; each application will be assessed on its merits.

Only in the instance that a recorded conviction is deemed to be a risk to the pilgrim and therefore the organisation, will this affect the outcome of the host family application. All information is treated in accordance with confidentiality

policies and guidelines. For ease of this process, the police checks will be conducted through the local parish or school through which the host family is associated. Cost associated with the police checks will be covered by the parish and/or Oblate Youth Australia.

5.7 Arrival

When participants arrive in the host city, transport will be organised to facilitate their journey to the parish or school as a central point of collection by the host families. All hosts will be expected to meet their hosted pilgrim at the parish or school and transport them back to their home-stay residence.

6. HOST VENUES

In the circumstances where host families are not attainable or a home-stay program is not feasible, then alternative accommodation will be organised through an Oblate school or parish, or a school or parish with which Oblate Youth Australia has established a formal relationship and agreement for hosting accommodation of its members.

In this scenario, this policy will work in a similar manner in establishing the appropriate guidelines by which an agreement will be established with the host venue and all persons involved will undergo the same training and police checks as home-stay hosts.

In this scenario, other determinations will need to be made including appropriate allocation of men and women and those over the age of eighteen and those under the age of eighteen. Bathroom facilities will need to be allocated as well as sleeping quarters. All of this will be conducted similarly to the camp policy and coordinated by the National Oblate Youth Office.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

All necessary procedures will be carried out under the guidance of the National Oblate Youth Office to reduce risk of harm to the individuals involved in the home-stay program or alternative accommodation arrangements. For further information, refer to Appendix II: Risk Analysis.

8. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a conflict arises between a host applicant and anyone involved in the home-stay program the first point of call is the National Oblate Youth Office, who will act to resolve the matter. The final decision will lie with the National Director of Oblate Youth Australia.

If a conflict arises between any individual and another during the home-stay program, the first point of call will be the local home-stay coordinator, who will refer the matter to the National Oblate Youth Office. In the same manner as

above, the final decision will lie with the National Director of Oblate Youth Australia.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT

All coordinators, team members, priests, hosts, participants and other individuals involved in the home-stay program or alternative accommodation arrangements will be required to sign a code of conduct, which can found in Appendix I.

10. TRAINING

All necessary information and training will be administered by the National Oblate Youth Office and provided to individuals involved in the home-stay program or alternative accommodation arrangements.

1. Host Families

Host families will be provided with the necessary information regarding the home-stay program and respective event for which it has been organised. This information will be provided by the National Oblate Youth Office only after the host has been deemed successful in their application.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

Home-Stay Host Family Code of Conduct

All Home-stay hosts, and those residing in the home, are required to be aware of the “Home-Stay, Billeting and Other Accommodation Policy”, “Oblate Youth Australia Child Protection Policy” and the “Home-Stay Host Code of Conduct”. All necessary policies are available on the Oblate Youth website. The Home-Stay Host Code of Conduct has been created for the safety of the Oblate Youth Australia Participants and Host Families alike.

Home-stay hosts, according to the “Home-Stay, Billeting and Other Accommodation Policy” will be required to welcome a minimum of two individuals into their home for a defined period of time specified by the National Oblate Youth Office. Home-stay hosts are responsible for the following:

- Providing a safe, clean and comfortable environment for participants
- Providing reasonable and comfortable bedding arrangements
- Providing clean and adequate bathroom facilities
- If possible, provide transport to and from a central location, as specified by the home-stay coordinator
- Provide meals (usually breakfast) or facilities for meals, if required, as specified by the home-stay coordinator
- Adhering to the guidelines set out by the National Oblate Youth Office and/or the homestay coordinator
- Attending any information sessions held by the National Oblate Youth Office and/or the home-stay coordinator

As a home-stay host I have read all relevant policies and guidelines and understand that I am expected to adhere to a duty of care for the participants staying in my home.

I will:

- Conduct myself in an appropriate manner through language, dress and behaviours and be a hospitable host to promote the values of the Catholic Church through my words and actions
- Act in accordance with federal laws, and the laws, regulations and rules of the State/Territory in which the event is hosted
- Treat guests with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration
- Avoid all forms of discrimination and respect the dignity of each person
- Uphold the authority of those responsible for the program or event in which the guests I am hosting are participating
- Respect the home-stay guest’s right to privacy
- Liaise with the home-stay coordinator regarding any concerns or difficulties
- Notify the home-stay coordinator of any change of circumstances within the household

I will not:

- Engage in any inappropriate conduct, especially with minors
- Upload, post on social media or transmit via a mobile device embarrassing or inappropriate photos or content involving home-stay guests
- Smoke in the presence of minors, purchase tobacco products for or distribute tobacco products to minors

- Purchase alcohol for or distribute alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years
- Use, purchase, possess, distribute or be under the influence of illegal substances at any time
- Participate in, or tolerate behaviour which humiliates, ridicules, threatens or degrades home-stay guests
- Use physical discipline in any way of behaviour management of others. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This includes, but is not limited to slapping, pinching, shaking, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviour
- Use rude or offensive language in the presence of others

I hereby declare that I am not currently being investigated for, nor have I ever been convicted of an offence against any person whether an adult or minor (including but not limited to murder, assault, battery, sexual assault, injury to a minor, and abandoning or endangering a minor); I have never been terminated from employment or a volunteer position for reasons related to allegations of physical or sexual abuse by me. I understand that should my response to any of the statements above change, I am obligated to inform **Oblate Youth Australia**.

Further, I understand that my failure to agree to and abide by the Home-Stay Family Code of Conduct will exclude me from participating in the Home-stay program. I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to follow it. I understand that if the Code of Conduct is breached, then **Oblate Youth Australia** may report my misconduct to local statutory authorities, if the breach in any way violates local ordinances or laws.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Risk Analysis

RISK ANALYSIS - HOME-STAY PROGRAM

Risk	Consequence	Probability ^{1 =} <i>very low, 5 = very high</i>	Resolution
Unable to attract sufficient numbers or quality of candidates	A lot of participants without a place to stay which will lead to accommodation issues and pressure on the home-stay coordinator and National Oblate Youth Office	3	Strong promotional campaign to raise awareness within the local community. Clear messages about the requirements of the Host. Ensure that the application phase is long enough for people to apply. Ensure that the home-stay coordinator and visitation team are positive, well trained and proactive.
Documents from the home visits (e.g. signed application forms, police checks etc.) are lost in transit	Incomplete assessment of the home - this could create legal risks. Loss of personal information.	2	Thorough training and processes in place for home visit team. The home visit team will report to the office at the beginning and end of each day. Regular filing and record keeping will take place.
Host accused of unlawful/unacceptable behaviour at home.	Uncomfortable/Unsatisfactory experience for participant. Potential complaints to the office. Potential legal issues.	1	There will be a Code of Conduct applicable to all involved in the program. The content and application of the Code of Conduct will be included in any training for home-stay host families. The Code of Conduct will also be available to participants.
Participant/Guests accused of unlawful/unacceptable behaviour at home.	Uncomfortable/Unsatisfactory experience for host family. Potential complaints to the office. Potential legal issues.	1	There will be a Code of Conduct applicable to all involved in the program. The content and application of the Code of Conduct will be included in any training for home-stay host families. The Code of Conduct will also be available to participants. Communication of any "House Rules" to the guests upon arrival to establish expectations early.
Appointed host families do not meet behavioural or operational requirements of the role.	Uncomfortable/Unsatisfactory experience for participant. Potential complaints to the office.	2	Training the home visitation team will be thorough and well planned. Home-stay coordinators will be encouraged to build strong relationships with the host families of their parish in order to detect any issues early.
Quantity of applicants required unknown until too late in the process.	Excess or shortage of host families which could result in negative perceptions about the office planning.	3	Any events that requires a home-stay program will have registration cut off well in advance of the event date. Regular updates and estimates will be provided to the local home-stay coordinator to assist with planning.
Host families home is unsafe.	Participant injures themselves and initiates legal action.	1	A thorough home visit assessment process is in place. All home visitation teams are well trained. All necessary insurance is checked and up to date.
Participant does not show up.	Host family has a negative experience.	1	Registration data indicates participant numbers. Communication with the home-stay coordinator will be regular.
Host family withdraws from the program at the last minute.	Participant arrives without a place to stay.	1	Ensure that messages are very clear right from the beginning regarding the requirements of a Host family so that they are not surprised or put off at the last minute. Reasons for being a host family are requested early on in the process. Back up accommodation options to ensure a participant has a place to stay if this occurs.

Appendix 3: Home Visitation Checklist

Home-stay Site Visit Checklist

Documents to collect during visit

1. Complete Police Check consent form with certified copy of ID
2. Signed Home-Stay Agreement and Code of Conduct

Details

Home-Stay Visit Team:

Appointment Date:

Time:

Family Name:

First Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact Details: (H):

(M):

(W):

Email:

Type of Residence:

House

Unit/Apartment

Other:

Number of people residing in the home

Name	Age	Gender	Relationship to applicant	Police Clearance Number

Observations	Comments
How many guests can be accommodated	
Heating and cooling in house	
How many smoke detectors are there	
Describe the planned sleeping arrangements	
Are there any pets (please specify)	
Ability to accommodate people with disabilities (please specify)	

Previous experience providing home-stay accommodation	
How far is the residence from the Parish	
Available to transport guests to and from parish each day	

Additional Comments/Notes:

Appendix 4: Home-Stay Application Form

Home-Stay Host Application Form

Host Details

Given Names:

Family Name:

Preferred Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone: (H):

(M):

(W):

Email:

Home Details

1. Do you consent to undergo a police record check and sign a supporting statutory declaration for security and safety purposes? Yes / No *(please circle)*
2. Are you the property owner? Yes / No *(please circle)*
3. Is your home smoke free? Yes / No *(please circle)*
4. Do you have any pets? Yes / No *(please circle)*
Please specify:
5. How many pilgrims can you comfortably host? 2 3 4 5 6 *(please circle)*
Minimum of 2 guests per home

Is your home suitable to host participants with disabilities, if so to what extent? *(E.g. Ramps and railings installed around the home, railings in bathrooms etc)*

Is there any other information about your home or the health of other residents of your home, that is relevant to the safety and wellbeing of the participants?

Why would you like to be a Home-Stay Host?

Applicant Declaration

All information that I have provided on this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5: State or Territory Child Protection Policy

<http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/files/f/4463/Child%20Protection%20Council%20Policy.pdf>