



Host Family Handbook

International Student Services • 1501 Harbor Bay Parkway, Alameda, CA 94502 • Tel: 510-814-7321

Dear Host Families:

Thank you for being one of our Host Families. In this handbook, you will find a lot of helpful information, as you get ready to have one of our international students live in your home.

The CCS student population is a combination of U.S. citizen and International Students. Although the ancestry of the majority of our students will be Asian, the difference in cultures between someone raised in America and someone raised in Asia is significant. The International student's presence and integration into academic, community, and student life is essential to the overall vision of CCS: Ensuring that all CCS graduates have the experience and skills to excel in the global environment of the 21st century. As part of this vision, the mission of International Student Services (ISS) is to facilitate the international student's transition to life in the United States and at CCS, promote interactions between the U.S. and the international student population, and provide services necessary to meet the special needs of international students.

As a Host Family to an International student beginning or continuing their education in the States, you will encounter questions from your student(s) about U.S. customs and values, living situations, government and school regulations, academic issues, school and community facilities, medical care, banking, shopping, and entertainment. ISS is a resource to help you respond to these questions and serve as an information resource for all partners in the international education process, those both at school and in the host family setting.

Responding to the needs of international students also means serving as a liaison between the many partners involved in the international education process. ISS staff assists students, family members, host families, businesses, and faculty and staff from CCS in coordinating the academic and support services for international students. From activities such as host family placement situations to helping students make contact with family members during civil unrest or return home during emergency situations, ISS links all these partners and provides a support network for them.

We are here to support you as you begin this new adventure. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Note: Information contained in this handbook is subject to change without prior notice.

Best Regards,

International Student Services

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Section 1: Pre-Arrival, Roles & Expectations

Chinese Christian Schools

(Hereafter referred to as CCS), with 25 years in the California Bay Area, CCS promises to do its best to provide students with a high quality educational experience that will help them in all areas of life. Host families will be expected to be involved in the life of the school.

Your Student

Your Student will be an international student between the ages of 13 and 18. Your student may or may not be a believer and may or may not come from a Christian family. In order to participate in the program, your student will have been thoroughly screened in a variety of areas including academic ability, language ability, health, interests, character, community involvement, and motivation for participating. All students will be adequately conversational in English.

You as a Host Family

You as a host family will be your student's temporary family away from home. You will house your student, provide his or her meals and transportation, and serve as the main support for your student while he or she is living in your home. Your student will be screened and matched to your family.

Student Services

International Student Services (ISS) exists to support the International Students in all aspects of their US experience. That includes support of the Host family in several ways including determining student/host family matches and helping both entities adjust to the inevitable changes that occur when a new member is added to your family. Please do not hesitate to call Student Services with any questions or concerns you have with any aspect of hosting your student.

Information/Communication

- We provide the student and family with an International Student Handbook as a reference for the resources we provide and the guidelines for expectations from CCS.
- We provide orientation to life in the U.S. and to school for the student soon after arrival in the U.S.
- A member of the Student Services Department will maintain regular meetings with each student to answer any questions that may arise from the academic, social, cultural, housing experience.
- We provide regular communication with the student's family in order to apprise them of how the student is progressing in the social/cultural arenas.

Housing and Lodging

- We coordinate the student's placement with a host family living situation under the student placement guidelines.
- We meet regularly with both the student and the host family (separately and/ or together as the situation warrants) to address any questions or issues that arise during the student's stay with the host family.
- We interview, screen and inspect housing of all prospective host families before accepting them into the program.

Personal Support

- We provide regular communications with student's family via email.
- We assist students in the event of personal and family tragedies.
- We assist students in establishing friends, mentors, and support structure.
- We arrange for counselors, medical check-ups, and professional services as needed.
- We facilitate conflict resolution as needed.
- We educate students regarding personal safety

Cultural Transition Support

- We support cultural adjustment and socialization issues.
- We provide a formal cultural orientation session soon after arrival in the States.

Cultural Education/Experience

- Throughout the year, we will provide opportunities to experience American culture first hand. Some possibilities include museum visits, sporting events, performing arts, camping, and American cooking.

Miscellaneous

- Health insurance and health care
- Academic concerns and CCS policies
- Travel, transportation, banking, and other settling-in needs
- English Language Conversation Partners
- We manage programs for faculty and staff regarding international student issues.

Section 2: Preparation & Arrival

Preparation

We ask that you, as host parents, provide a bed and basic household items such as a pillow, blanket, sheets, and towels for your student. A quiet study place with a chair and desk is also required. As you prepare for your student's arrival, take a walk through your house and try to see things through your student's eyes and how he or she will see things for the first time.

Visa & Passport Info

For students entering the United States, they will be issued an Arrival Departure Records Form (1-94 form). They should keep this form with their passport throughout the stay because it will contain vital information about the visit.

For more extensive information about passports and visas, check out the below websites:

- www.uscis.gov
- http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1270.html

Welcoming your student

There are several great ways to make your student feel welcomed:

- Welcome sign on their door
- Small practical gift
- Sign with their name at the airport, balloons, flowers

In-country orientation

Orientation for all new international students is required during the first week of arrival. We ask that you bring your student to and from this meeting. While this orientation is not required for you or your family, we encourage you to attend. Not only will this orientation help your student in their transition to life in America, it will also be a great place to meet some of their new classmates and their host parents/guardians.

First days

The first few days after your student arrives will be a very exciting, yet overwhelming, time for them. Remember that they will also have jet lag and be adjusting to the new time change. Try to remind them to get more rest than they normally would at home.

The first day, just go over the most important and basic procedures of the household. Other items and rules can wait until your student is more ready to receive and comprehend them. In the Appendix is a helpful list of questions to discuss with your student some time in the first week or so.

Section 3: Cultural Learning & Culture Shock

Knowing your student's culture

Knowing your student's culture is a very important step in learning to understand and to connect with them. While you can never fully understand where they are coming from, with some research, you can begin to understand their culture. Going to your local library, doing some research on the Internet, talking with other immigrants who have come from that country, and other such activities are all great ways to start this learning process.

Knowing your own culture

Knowing your own culture and how that has affected who you are and where you come from will help you be more sensitive to your student's needs. Here are some important questions to think about as you prepare for the arrival of your student:

- How do you greet each other?
- How do you communicate emotions?
- How do you show you are angry, happy, or annoyed at a person?
- What manners or etiquette are typical?
- What types of transportation do you use?
- What kinds of houses do people live in?
- What values are important in your culture?
- What type of living environment are you used to?
- What is your government like?
- What are your major holidays? Why and how do you celebrate these holidays?
- How are the economics of your country?
- What is the social life like?

Cultural Learning

Living with an international student will give you many insights to how other cultures think and act. This is an ideal time for you and your family to experience cultural learning as you compare your student's culture to American culture. Remember that just because one culture does something a certain way, does not make it *better*, just *different*.

As your student will only be with you for a short period of time (yes, 10 months will pass quickly!) try to maximize your time with him or her and learn all you can about them and the culture he or she has left behind in order to attend school in the States.

What is Culture Shock?

Webster defines Culture Shock as "a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation." Culture shock happens to all people who are dropped into a culture different than their own. While your student will receive information on culture shock during their orientation, it is very important that you also have a basic understanding of what your student will be going through. Being familiar with the signs and stages will help you to know how to communicate and support your student. Please see the Lisa Chinn Espineli's paper on Culture Shock located in the Appendix of this handbook.

Common Signs of Culture Shock

- Emotional mood swings
- Hyper sensitivity and irritability
- Mental confusion and fatigue
- Physical fatigue
- Low immunity, susceptible to illness
- Feelings of no control
- Hostility to the new environment, culture, and people
- Utopian ideas of the home country
- Uneasiness

- Loss of perspective
- Preoccupation with returning home
- Boredom or withdrawal
- Excessive sleep

How to help your student handle culture shock

- Don't let them isolate themselves. Remind them that these are normal reactions to stress and are nothing to be ashamed of.
- Give them time to adjust and time to get used to where they are living. We discourage visits from family and friends during the beginning of the school year so that they can thoroughly adjust.
- Explain your family's daily schedule, rules, and how things work in your house. It is important for them to feel apart of your family and knowing the rules and schedule will help in that process.
- Take time to sit down with your host son or daughter and go over the list of first week questions located in the Appendix section of this handbook,
- Encourage them to get involved in student organizations.
- Repeat your explanations to make sure they fully understand your expectations or explanations. Make sure you are speaking clearly and slowly. Try to avoid using slang.
- Make sure they are keeping in touch with home. E-mail or calls to their family will keep them up-to-date on what is happening to them and what they are experiencing.
- Help them keep a sense of humor and to try to laugh off situations that are confusing.
- Make sure they are taking care of their health, exercising, and eating well. They should get plenty of rest the first few months as living in a new environment can cause mental and physical fatigue.
- Encourage them to do things they enjoy doing: painting, playing music, etc.
- Let them know that you are there to support them and to listen to them if they ever need to talk.

Section 4: Program requirements, purpose, and stipulations

1. CCS International Student Program is designed to increase understanding among people of the world through cultural learning and interaction; it is not to be used for the sole purpose of foreign language training for the student, although this will be a natural result. The student's parents should discuss the importance of good behavior with their son or daughter and ensure that he or she understands the significance of acting in a manner that will reflect well on his or her family and country.
2. The student must make all effort to improve his or her ability in English. Teachers, host parents and others in the community will appreciate the effort, and learning the language will go a long way toward the student's acceptance in the host community. An order to assist the student in his or her English ability, the host family should speak to the student in English.
3. The student must make an effort to get involved in the host community by attending events and volunteering. He or she should plan recreation and spare-time activities around school, church, or community events. The student should not spend all his or her time with other international students. Also, students should choose friends carefully by asking for and heeding the advice of host parents, counselors, and school personnel.
4. The student's acceptance into CCS does not guarantee that a student will receive a diploma. Graduation is not guaranteed for any student.
5. The student's acceptance into CCS does not guarantee that a student will be eligible to participate in athletics.
6. The student's parents (and the student, if the student is of legal age) give CCS the right to use the student's photograph for reproduction in any medium for the purposes of publication, advertising, display, or editorial use. When using the student's picture, CCS will not disclose the name of the student or any additional personal or contact information. We will not use photos to appeal to public pity or guilt when recruiting host families.
7. CCS reserves the right to terminate the participation in the program of any student whose conduct may be considered detrimental or incompatible with the interests and security of the program. If this decision is ever made, the participant and his and her parents will be notified in writing and all fees that have been paid will be nonrefundable.
8. The student's parents give CCS the right to disclose pertinent personal information to the student's Host Family, such as but not limited to information regarding: academics, finances, and medical.

US Laws

9. The student must obey the laws of the United States, the state of California and any states they may visit while in the United States. If found guilty of violating any law, the student must return home at his or her family's own expense as soon as the student is released by authorities. A CCS representative will ensure that the student is transported to the airport.
10. Do not use illegal drugs while you are in the United States, other than those prescribed to you by a doctor or those bought over the counter at stores.
11. The drinking of any alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. The legal age to drink alcohol in the U.S. is 21 years old. You cannot drink or buy alcohol if you are younger than 21. Even if the laws of the host country, state, or province allow students to consume alcoholic beverages, the student is not allowed to do so. (All U.S. states have strict age restrictions on the use of alcoholic beverages.)
12. Smoking and the use of any tobacco products are forbidden. (Most U.S. states forbid the

use of tobacco products for those under the age of 18. Though other countries and provinces may allow the use of tobacco products, the use of such products has been proven to be a serious health risk. Therefore, this program forbids the use of tobacco products of any kind.)

Rules of the host family

13. The student and his or her parents must communicate with the host parents before the student's departure from the home country. (CCS will provide the host family's contact information to the student before his or her departure). CCS International Student Services and other CCS staff base student placements on compatibility with the selected host family as determined.
14. The student will become an integral part of the host family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a child of his or her age in the family. Therefore, the student must obey the host family's rules and be willing to participate in family activities such as attending religious services.
15. Problems that arise in the host family are, to be resolved first by discussion between the host family and the student, and then, if necessary, with the assistance of ISS Staff. The student is not to discuss any Host Family problems with others.
16. The student will be enrolled as a full-time student and must attend school regularly. He or she must make all effort to complete assignments on time and to make satisfactory progress in his or her classes and curricular activities. By enrolling full-time at CCS, the student agrees to obey all the school rules.
17. While it is the desire of CCS that the student's parents maintain a friendly relationship with the host family, the student's parents must follow the established lines of communication for official business. (All formal communication, including questions, concerns, and complaints, should be directed to ISS staff only.)
18. Visits by the student's parents, siblings, or friends while the student is participating in the program require prior approval by CCS ISS staff, and they must fit within special program guidelines. Typically, visits may be arranged during spring break and are not recommended during major holidays. Host families will not be expected to house students' guests at any time.
19. If selected for the program, the student will be provided with training and written material on abuse and harassment, including contact information for the person he or she should contact in the case of abuse or harassment. The student should talk with CCS ISS staff, host parents, or another trusted adult if he or she encounters any form of abuse or harassment.

Insurance coverage and high-risk behavior

20. As noted previously, the student must have insurance that provides emergency health, medical, and accident coverage for injury and illness; death benefits (including repatriation of remains); disability or dismemberment benefits; emergency medical evacuation; emergency visitation expenses; 24-hour emergency assistance services; and legal services.
21. Students will not be allowed to participate in high-risk activities such as skydiving, bungee jumping, hang gliding, and other such activities. Participation in any such activities or other dangerous activities may be cause for immediate return to his or her home country. The family will accept full responsibility for any situation arising from the student's involvement with the above.
22. The student will abstain from all sexual activity. Serious romantic involvement is strongly

discouraged.

23. For health reasons, the student is not allowed to get a new tattoo or body piercing during the program. (For existing tattoos or piercing; see the CCS Parent/Student Handbook.)
24. Inappropriate use of the Internet by the student, including viewing pornography and visiting questionable websites, is not acceptable. Such activity will first result in a warning, and subsequent activity will result in program termination.
25. The student may not take any action that may change the nature of his or her life (for example, becoming engaged or married).

Finances

26. The student should have sufficient financial support to ensure his or her well being during the entire program and to cover all expenses that may arise. Expenses that must be covered by the student and his or her parents include the following:
 - All school tuition, program and school fees
 - Textbooks, uniforms, and school supplies
 - Round-trip international airfare, passport, and visa
 - Health, medical, dental, and accident insurance, and any medical expenses not covered by insurance
 - Any costs related to the early return of the student to his or her home country for any reason
 - Personal day-to-day expenses such as telephone calls, clothes, toiletries, and recreational activities (suggested amount: about \$200 a month)
 - Additional costs as circumstances arise
27. The student and his or her parents must pay bills promptly.
28. The student is not permitted to borrow money.
29. If for any reason, including denial of visa, the student is unable to participate in the program, a percentage of the program fee may be refunded, depending on the timing of the student's notice of withdrawal from the program. (Each school will have its own refund policy for tuition and fees.)

Travel

30. The student and his or her parents are required to purchase round-trip international air travel before the student departs from his or her home country. (CCS will supply the airport or airports to use and the days and times of departure and arrival. The return ticket is to be carried to the United States by the student and is to be kept in safekeeping by the student until he or she returns home.)
31. The student is permitted to travel domestically with his or her host parents or for CCS activities with CCS staff. CCS, the student's host family, and the student's parents must approve any other travel in writing. Students who travel by air to visit adult (18 years of age or older) relatives and are considered minors by the airline must pay to be chaperoned by the airline while they travel. Independent travel, where the student will spend time at a particular destination without proper adult supervision, is not allowed at any time during the program. (If a student is given the opportunity to go on a trip or attend an event, the student must make sure he or she understands all costs and responsibilities involved before going.)
32. During the program, first-year students are only allowed to go home early because of emergency situations (for example, the death of a family member). Returning yearlong students may go home during Christmas break. In all situations, approval to return home must be granted by CCS ISS.

33. The student must, within 10 days of the last day of school, either return home or be enrolled in a CCS-approved summer camp in the U.S. CCS will not guarantee host families during the summer break. Therefore, the student will not be granted permission to stay in the host country unless he or she is enrolled in an approved summer camp (for example, ESL camp). If a student is not enrolled in a camp for the entirety of the summer break, he or she must return home.

Section 5: Medical Concerns

Yearly medical examinations

Students will need a full medical exam and medical clearance from their physician before they are accepted into school. If they are planning on attending school in the States for more than one year, they are required to get a complete physical every summer before returning to school in the fall.

Immunizations

All students are responsible to have all required immunizations before they arrive in the U.S. If your student happens to ask you about immunizations in America, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control's website (www.cdc.gov/travel) for a list of immunizations they will need. Immunizations must be taken care of before departing their home country.

Insurance

Your student's insurance will include:

- Medical and accident coverage for injury and illness (emergency only)
- Death benefits (including repatriation of remains)
- Disability and dismemberment benefits
- Emergency medical evacuation
- Emergency visitation expenses
- 24-hour emergency assistance services
- Liability

Minor Health Concerns

Eye & Dental Problems

Your student's medical insurance does NOT cover expenses related to dental care and vision correction. Should he or she need these types of treatment while here in the States, they will need to contact their parents before treatment and make arrangements for the payment, either by credit card or with a bank draft sent by the parents. You should *not* pay for medical bill even if they promise to pay you back right away.

Minor Illnesses

If your student experiences any minor illnesses such as colds, sore throats, flu, upper respiratory infections, and sprains, you can determine what type of treatment or action should be taken.

Serious Health Concerns

Emotional Concerns

If your student is experiencing any drastic out-of-the character emotions, such as feelings of depression, sadness, or disconnect, please let International Student Service staff know. We are here to help you in whatever way possible.

Major Illnesses & Hospital Admittance

You should always notify International Student Services in the event of serious medical situations or conditions to your student. Serious situations would include any type of on-going illness, a broken bone, hospitalization, proposed or emergency surgery, or any lingering condition. We will make all effort to reach your student's natural parents for consent before treatment, if, however, the situation is life-threatening, the permanent host parent or guardian can authorize treatment or surgery on behalf of the overseas parents by presenting the "Guardianship Form" to the hospital.

Section 6: Financial Issues

Financial matters do not have to turn into big issues. Make sure that expenses be clearly discussed before hand to avoid any awkward situations. We advise you to write down what you will cover (ex. Meals at home, laundry detergent, common household items) and what your student is responsible for covering (ex. Outings with friends, clothes, toiletries). Our desire is that your student will become part of your family. With that in mind, it is normally expected that host families will cover all normal living expenses. Exceptions to this rule is when the student wants to do something out of the norm (ex. the student wants to take a trip or if the student wants to buy an expensive brand name shampoo while your family uses non-name brand items.) When going out to eat as a family, host families should pay for the student.

You will be compensated for housing a student short-term at a rate of \$900/month. In most cases, the school will issue a check each month. You may choose to use this compensation to help cover added expenses such as food and utilities or to take the student out to eat or to participate in a special activity. All monies you receive are considered additional, therefore taxable income.

You may reduce the amount of this taxable income by providing documented substantiation of the cost (expenses) of your housing a student.

This process is based on an "overage" or negative financial impact on your budget. In other words, how has your student impacted your previous established budget? How much more are you spending to provide quality care and housing for your student? This overage must be substantiated by: reasonable allocations applicable to housing the student, actual receipts, and/or a running journal or log of expenditures. It is recommended that you provide monthly documentation to ISS rather than trying to come up with substantiation at the end of a term. Examples of substantiation are as follows:

- Food: grocery receipts showing additional spending on student
- Utilities: showing additional cost of water, heating/cooling
- Mileage: keeping a log of miles driven to transport the child to school and from school, school events, shopping, etc. (Mileage is only applicable when it is beyond your normal activities.)
- Misc. Expenses: entertainment etc. paid for – keep actual receipts.
 - The IRS allows for expenses up to \$75 to be unsubstantiated. (ie. You lost or didn't receive a receipt.) The \$75 is a per expense threshold, not a cumulative amount.

If you choose to provide documented substantiation of your expenses, your 1099 will reflect a reduced amount of compensation, ie. taxable income.

You should talk to your financial advisor or tax preparer to see how this will affect your taxes.

Budgeting

While we do encourage our students and their parents to come up with a budget before departing the home country, please take time to sit down with your international son or daughter soon after their arrival to discuss his or her budget. You may need to help them adjust the budget since you will be more familiar with prices in the States. The budget should include basic expenses such as clothing, toiletries, events with friends, and any additional souvenirs they might wish to purchase during their time in the States.

Each student will have a school account with which to pay for things such as:

- School lunches
- Lab fees
- Graduation expenses (such as photos)

- School events (outings, trips, banquets)
- Yearbooks
- Sports gear and clothing

Opening a bank account

Some students may wish to open a bank account when they arrive. As banking can be very confusing, even for Americans, making sure your student understands the ins and outs of banking before they decide to open any kind of account. Many banks have accounts geared towards high school students that are easy to use. Check with your local bank to see what kind of documentation your student will need. If for some reason, you have trouble opening an account for your student at your own bank, we recommend you try Bank of America.

Section 7: Family Life

Family Involvement

Your international student is now part of your family and should be treated as such. Please include your student in all family activities, including, but not limited to: household chores, family outings, family meals & devotion times, extended family get-togethers, etc. Notes from previous host families have indicated that their international students tended to be very shy and content to stay in their own room. Encourage your student to be a part of the family. They may need to be taught some habits that we would consider common courtesies such as saying good morning or good night.

Relationships

If your children are living at home, be sure to start preparing them for your international son or daughter's arrival. Try to have realistic expectations when it comes to your student and his or her relationship with you and your family. While many times, the student fits right into the family, other times, the student never fully connects with the family. Do not expect your child to become best friends with your international student. It is important to treat your student exactly like you would your children so that there is no jealousy or hurt feelings on your child's part from appeared favoritism.

If you have an infant or toddler at home, please make sure your student knows what he or she can or cannot do with your child (ex. May I hold the baby? Should I ask first? What is the child's nap schedule or eating habits? Does the child have any allergies or medical concerns that I need to be aware of? How does your family deal with discipline issues? What should I do when I feel the child has done something wrong?) Being up front about these questions can help in avoiding any situations that would cause you or your child to worry.

Family/House Rules

Before your student arrives, you might find it helpful to write down all the house rules. Your student will find the list helpful to refer back to and this will help you to write down all the "unwritten" rules of your household that your student should know. Some students may not be accustomed to helping with the household chores at home and may need more encouragement and explanation about doing chores. Whatever you expect out of your own children, the same expectations should be placed on your international son or daughter.

Computer Usage

We have found that our international students tend to be on the computer much more than is recommended or needed either chatting with friends back home or watching TV and movies in their own language. We highly recommend that you monitor your student's computer usage and limit their access to the Internet. Such long periods of time online can be detrimental to their studies as well as make the transition to life in America much harder than it needs to be.

Phone Usage

To avoid the hassle of keeping track of international and lengthy local calls by your student, we recommend several other options:

- Calling cards. Students may use pre-paid international calling cards whenever they wish to call home. These cards can be purchased at convenience or grocery stores and are very affordable.
- Skype. Another way for your student to call home is through the Internet. Internet based programs, such as Skype, offer free phone service through the web.
- Cell phone. Your student may wish to purchase a cell phone for the duration of his or her stay. You may add them to your cell phone plan if you wish, but are not expected to do so. Students are responsible for all costs related to their cell phone plan.

Section 8: Transportation

Daily Transportation

You should plan on providing transportation to and from most activities. For school, you may have the student take the school bus or you may drive them yourself. Please remind your student that they need to get your permission if they are to be transported by a friend's parent or someone else. It is up to your discretion whether or not you permit them to do so.

Public Transportation

While your student may have used public transportation every day back in their home country, students may not do so alone their first year studying here in the States. If your student is a returning student, you may allow them to use public transportation by themselves if you feel this would not place them in any questionable situation. We recommend that you converse with your student's parents about this.

Driver's License

Although international students are permitted to obtain a United States driver's license, we ask that you as host parents sit down with your international son or daughter and have an in-depth conversation if they express interest. Students should be aware of all aspects involved in obtaining a U.S. license, including the test, insurance, and liability. Please contact ISS for a complete set of ISS's policy about driver's license.

Section 9: Hosting Guidelines

Hosting Difficulties

Your hosting experiences will more than likely include highs and lows. Along with the happy times, there will be times of difficulties and misunderstanding as you and your international son or daughter learn to live and grow together. When difficulties arise, try to resolve them as soon as you perceive a problem. Try to see things from the eyes of your student. Be patient and understanding, as you would want someone to be with your own child if he or she were in the same situation overseas.

If all attempts at resolution have failed, please contact Student Services. We are here to support and assist you!

Vacations

During your student's stay with you, you may wish to go on vacation. While it is a nice gesture if you offer to pay for your student to accompany you, it is not required. Vacation plans (and any costs that the student might have to pay for if he or she chooses to accompany your family should be clearly explained to the parents). If your student chooses not to go with you on vacation (or if you need short-term housing for your student for any other reason), please refer to the ISS short-term housing policies for additional information.

Communication with your Student's Parents

We encourage you to have regular communication (at least once a month) with your student's parents via email and/or phone conversations. Close communication will help all of you to be on the same page. If you cannot communicate with your student's parents because of language barriers, you may forward any emails or messages to ISS and we will see that they get translated. We encourage you to send photos of your family and your international student doing different activities together.

Visits by your student's family and friends

- We ask that students' friends or family not visit them during their first semester so that they have time to fully adjust to their new environment. Entertaining visitors from home early in the program will interfere with their normal adjustment process.
- Visits must take place during the school breaks when students are home from school, because friends and family will not be allowed to attend school with them.
- Visits are not allowed during the major holidays in order to be considerate to you, as host family, who may be traveling or may be hosting other visitors at those times.
- Your student's visitors cannot stay with you at your house.
- Since visits can be disruptive to schedule and studies, we ask that visits from relatives or friends not last more than 3-4 days.

Safety Issues: Helpful Hints

In your student's International Student Handbook, we have discussed simple ways to keep them safe while living in America. Within the first few days, it is important that you review safety measures with your student, including: family emergency plan, what to do or not to do when home alone, how to use all appliances, safety issues in your area and city, etc.

Abuse & Harassment

Abuse and harassment are very real and serious issues. Your student's safety and security are our high priority, so we want to do everything possible to ensure that their experience is free of abuse and harassment. We will also be available to you in case problems do arise.

Section 10: School & Community Life

Classes & Time Management

Students are required to attend all classes, complete assignments, and follow all school policies. Failure to do so may result in the termination of their time at school. If you find that your student is having problems in classes, please let us know.

School Involvement

We encourage students to get involved in school activities as much as possible, which could include sports, drama, yearbook, and other school activities. If your student is experiencing homesickness or disconnect with people here, encourage him or her to stay busy and get involved with activities with which they are interested in.

Friendship

Friendships with peers will be vital to your student's study abroad program. While it will be natural for your student to gravitate towards peers who speak his or her own language, encourage them to branch out and meet all types of students and friends. As you would in your own child's life, be proactive in knowing whom your host son or daughter is befriending.

Dating

We encourage students not to consider dating until they are 16 and have been in the states for more than 1 year. Beginning a relationship too early is not beneficial for their adjustment to living abroad. We encourage them to get both their natural parents permission (in writing) and your permission. There are many group activities you can encourage your student to be involved in to make friends with people of both genders.

Community Involvement

Besides getting involved with your family and school, another important way for your student to experience life in America is to get involved with the community. There are many fun ways to do that!

- Go with your student to visit local tourist attractions
- Take a walk in a local park with your student
- Explain to him or her how to volunteer at community events
- Take him or her to go to the local library and open a library account
- Attend a local fair or festival (most cities have a calendar of community events on their websites)
- Take him or her around to meet your neighbors

Religion & Church

The United States has a very diverse religious culture. There are many religions co-existing together. You may have very different religious beliefs and practices than your student. It is important to remember to be tolerant and accepting of other religions and those that practice them.

In addition, keep in mind that your student may not know a lot about the religion that you may practice, so be patient and understanding of them. If your student would like to attend services for a religion that differ from your own, please discuss with them how transportation arrangements may be made for them to do so.

Occasional Employment

While international students cannot get full-time or part-time jobs because of their visas, occasional short-term employment is permitted. Jobs such as babysitting or yard work fall under this category.

While it is fine for your student to occasionally baby-sit younger host siblings, we ask that you not expect your international son or daughter to baby-sit your children on a regular basis.

Section 11: Departure

Non-emergency Early Return

Students who choose an early return to the home country for non-emergency related reasons will be removed from the Host Family Program and not allowed to return the same school year. He or she will not be reimbursed for any previously paid tuition, housing, or any other pre-paid fees. The student and his or her family are solely responsible for the purchase of flight tickets and any other expense incurred by the early return. All inquiries to return to school for another school term, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but are not guaranteed. Non-emergency early returns include the following:

- Adjustment Problems
- Medical Issues
- Discipline Problems
- Financial Difficulties

Emergency Early Return

If the student has a death in the family or other family emergency, he or she may be granted an excused early return by Student Services staff. If the emergency occurs during the school term, the student will be expected to return to school in a timely manner (to be determined by the state of emergency and recommendation by Student Services). The student and his or her family are solely responsible for the purchase of flight tickets and any other expense incurred by the early return. Emergency early returns include:

- Emergency in the Family
- Death in the Family

Goodbyes

Saying goodbye is a very important part of the reentry process for your student. Saying goodbye will also help you to close this great part of your life. Some ways to say goodbye well:

- Give a little gift to your student. This does not have to be big or expensive. A little photo album of pictures of your time together or cards written by your kids are just, if not more, meaningful than a larger gift.
- Have a goodbye party for your student. This can include their new friends, teachers, and other influential people that they have come to know during their time abroad.
- Let your student know how he or she can keep in contact with you.
- Take them to see any last minute tourist attractions that they have wanted to see but have not gotten around to yet.
- Make their favorite American meal or take them out to their favorite restaurant one last time.

Packing

Packing to leave can be a very stressful and emotional process. Since your student will more than likely to have much more things to pack up than what he or she arrived with, you should remind them to begin packing at least 2-3 weeks before their actual departure date. If he or she cannot fit everything into their suitcase, they will need to ship some items home. As courtesy to you, we ask them not to leave this to the last minute AND not to leave it for you to ship. Shipping items home is their personal and financial responsibility.

Please refer to the TSA website www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/index.shtm for details about packing and luggage restrictions.

Student Re-entry

Students will also be going through a time of reentry into their home countries. Places that were once so familiar now may seem foreign to them because of the changes and experiences they have had while studying abroad. Even from the U.S., there are several ways to help ease their transition.

- Pray for them as they adjust and go through reverse culture shock.

- Keep in contact with them through email, phone calls, or Skype so that they have someone to talk to that can understand what they have experienced.
- Although Student Services will be doing some reentry exercises with them, they may feel more comfortable opening up to you. You can prepare them for reentry by getting them to think about their experience. What do you think has changed at home since you left? How do you think you have changed since coming the U.S.? What do you think will be the best part about returning home? What will be the hardest part?

Host Family Readjustment

Whether or not your hosting experience has been a fun-filled experience or one more stretching and growing, there will be a time of readjustment for you and your family members when your host son or daughter departs. This is a great time to evaluate your experience.

- What were some of the highlights of hosting? What were some of the challenges?
- What did you learn from this experience? What did your kids learn?

Host again?

By the time your student leaves, you may or may not know if you will ever host another international student. If you are interested in signing up for another year of adventure, please let us know!

Appendices

Biblical Hospitality [Appendix 1]

Verses for Crisis Hospitality [Appendix 2]

Sample Questions your student may ask you [Appendix 3]

Culture Shock Article [Appendix 4]

Appendix 1: Biblical hospitality:

- **Romans 12:13:** “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” (This verse comes in the middle of a passage about love.)
- **I Peter 4:9-11:** “Welcome others into your homes without complaining. God’s gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully. If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God’s very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides. Then in all things God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Give him the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” (These verses come at the end of a passage speaking about living for God.)
- **Matthew 25: 34-40** “Then the King will speak to those on his right. He will say, ‘My Father has blessed you. Come and take what is yours. It is the kingdom prepared for you since the world was created. I was hungry. And you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty. And you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger. And you invited me in. I needed clothes. And you gave them to me. I was sick. And you took care of me. I was in prison. And you came to visit me.’

“Then the people who have done what is right will answer him. ‘Lord,’ they will ask, ‘when did we see you hungry and feed you? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in? When did we see you needing clothes and give them to you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘What I’m about to tell you is true. Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Examples of Biblical hospitality:

- Gaius: Romans 16:23, III John 1-8
- Ruth: Ruth 2:8-9, 14-15
- Proverbs 31 Woman: Proverbs 31:20
- Abigail: I Samuel 25

Appendix 2: Verses for Crisis Hospitality

Comfort & Hope

Deuteronomy 28:13
Ezekiel 23:11-16
Isaiah 40:31
Isaiah 41:10, 14
Isaiah 43:4-5
Isaiah 60:4
Psalm 23
Psalm 39
Romans 5:5, 12-17
Romans 8:24
I Corinthians 12:21-22
Titus 1:2

Death of a Loved One

Matthew 5:4
John 11:17-27
II Corinthians 1:3-4

Depression

Psalm 34

Doubting the Love of God

Isaiah 6:13
Jeremiah 29:12-13
Jeremiah 31:3
John 3:16
Acts 17:27-28

Facing a Crisis

Psalm 121

Fearful & Worried

Psalm 91:10
Isaiah 6:13
Zephaniah 2:6
Zephaniah 3:13, 15
Matthew 6:19-34
I Peter 5:6-7
John 6:27-40
Revelation 18:4

Appendix 3: Sample Questions your student may ask you

1. What do I call you?
2. What am I expected to do daily other than make my bed, always keep my room tidy, and clean the bathroom every time I use it?
3. What is the procedure for dirty clothes?
4. Where do I keep clothes until wash day?
5. Should I wash my own clothes and underclothes?
6. Should I iron my own clothes?
7. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine at any time?
8. When is a convenient time for me to take a shower/bath (a.m. or p.m.)?
9. Where may I keep my toiletries?
10. May I use the family's bathroom toiletries (toothpaste, soap, etc), or am I responsible to purchase my own?
11. What time will meals be served?
12. What can I do to assist at mealtimes (help prepare meals, set the table, wash dishes, empty garbage)?
13. May I help myself to food and drink any time or should I ask first?
14. What areas of the house are strictly private (parents' bedroom, study/office)?
15. May I put pictures or posters in my room?
16. May I rearrange my bedroom?
17. What are your rules for me with regard to alcohol and smoking?
18. Where can I store my suitcases?
19. What time must I get up (on weekdays, on weekends)?
20. What time must I go to bed (on school nights, on weekends)?
21. What are the rules for going out at night and at what time must I be home? Can exceptions be made if I ask in advance?
22. May I have friends spend the night or visit during the day?
23. What are the rules about me using the telephone? Must I ask first?
24. May my friends call me?
25. May I call my friends?
26. May I make long-distance calls (overseas and within the country)?
27. How do you want me to keep track of the costs of my telephone calls?
28. What is the procedure for mailing letters? What address do I use for my incoming mail?
29. Do you have any dislikes, such as chewing gum, wearing a hat at the table, loud rock music, or smoking?
30. Do my host brothers or sisters have any dislikes?
31. What are the dates of your birthdays?
32. What are the transportation arrangements (car, bus, bike, walking, etc.)?
33. May I use the stereo, TV, computer, etc, at any time?
34. Are there restrictions on computer, email and Internet use?
35. What are the rules about attending religious services?
36. Would you like me to phone home if I will be more than 10 minutes late? 20 minutes late? 30 minutes late?
37. When we go out as a family, should I pay for my own entrance fee, meals, etc.?
38. What arrangements should I make for school lunch?
39. What else can I do around the house to help out (yard work, help clean, babysat)?
40. Is there anything else you would like me to know?