

Host Parent Handbook

1. Meeting Basic Needs

A. Meeting spiritual needs:

- a. First and foremost remember to pray for your student. They are a long way from home and you have become their stateside “mom and dad.” Pray for them the way you pray for your own children
- b. You must set an example of personal devotion to your children to help them be in tune with the Lord to meet expected and unexpected needs in their lives. This must include family devotions as well as personal devotions. Include your students in your family devotion time. Some may want to sing, play, share a scripture, or pray. Ask them about their needs and let them make prayer requests. Be sensitive to special needs they may not express verbally. Let God lead you to minister in their lives.
- c. You must model the desire for church fellowship for your student. Your attitude regarding church attendance will become their attitude. Let them become a part of your church in youth, in praise and worship, in musicianship, etc. Look for ways to involve them and help them to make your church, their church.
- d. If you see your student pulling away from spiritual things or showing resentment about going to church let one of us know. We can help counsel your student and ease some of that burden on you.
- e. Require your student to maintain the same limitations you have in place for your family regarding what you allow them to experience. Music, movies, books, comics, and venues of entertainment should not corrupt their spiritual wellbeing.

B. Meeting emotional needs:

- a. There may be an adjustment period with your student. Don't be alarmed, be engaged. In the beginning they may want to just go and hide in their rooms. It is important that you not let that happen from the very beginning. It is very hard to break that habit once it has

started. You will be happier and your student will be happier if you interact with one another rather than allow them to hide.

- b. Watch for signs of stress in your student. Insecurity, school stress, home stress, etc. may lead to emotional breakdown. If this happens sit them down and counsel them, pray with them, and encourage them. If you sense it is more than you can handle contact the international office to assist you. Most of these incidents can be prevented by just being alert and letting the student know you are concerned about their feelings.
- c. Students will need to be in contact with their families. Many of them know how to call collect or have a family calling plan. For those who do not, you will need to help them acquire calling cards or make sure they have email access. Remember that some of them may have 16-17 hour time differences so they may need some allowance for phone usage at strange hours. Be sensitive to this need, but do not allow your student to hold you captive to their desires in this respect. Staying up until 2:00 in the morning to talk to a parent is different than staying up that late to talk to friends.
- d. Encourage and help facilitate, when possible, your student to make American friends.

C. Meeting physical needs:

- a. There will be an adjustment period because of time changes that may radically affect their sleep needs. Be sure they eat and interact during those first sleepy days. Many students will want to stay up at night and sleep during the day because of the time difference. Do not allow this – or they will not adjust to our time. Some of them are used to staying up very late, encourage them to adapt to our American schedule with a reasonable bedtime that allows 8 hours of sleep.
- b. Meals should always be eaten with the family, not alone in their room or after the family has eaten. Make your student feel comfortable with mealtimes. If they have manners or mealtime customs different from ours lovingly show them the way we do

things. Let them be a part of making meals if they are interested. Many of them love to cook. Make special trips to the market to buy things they like and let them cook once in a while.

- c. In the event of illness or injury you can take your student to the nearest clinic or emergency room if required. Some students have international student insurance and some have insurance in their home country. Most of these plans require them to pay for care up front and then be reimbursed once the forms have been turned in. If the student has a credit card - that is the best way to handle the expense. They can pay right then and there is a receipt that can be accessed from the credit card company. In the rare event that a student does not have a credit card, they need to call their family and find out how they want to handle payment. They can usually wire funds or pay by credit card over the phone. Host parents are not expected to pay medical bills for students.
- d. Some of the international students have a tendency to feel a little invincible and therefore do not recognize danger like we do. You must make them aware of what is safe and what is not safe. They must never go anywhere without permission or without knowing the hazards of the area. Some of them have been accustomed to going places unattended in their home country. We have to let them know what is safe and not safe here in America.
- e. These students want to experience American culture in all its glory. Try to schedule things that will be culturally enriching to them. Outings do not have to be expensive. Go sightseeing, picnicking, visiting with family or anything you would do for fun with your children. Make your extended family their extended family.
- f. Remember that the students are coming from a different country and culture and will be sensitive to anything that seems racially biased or offensive. Let them know you respect their country and heritage and don't let anyone lump behavior with their race or culture. They are young people just like our young people who will

make mistakes because they are human not because they are Asian, or Hispanic, or European.

- g. All students should help with household chores (especially if there are other children in the house that have chores). They should be required to keep their rooms tidy and their laundry done. Some families choose to hire a maid. If this is the case, the student should pay for their share of the maid services (for example if the maid is doing their laundry or cleaning their room). In other households some mothers do not want students using the washer. That is up to you to regulate. Students who will do their own laundry need to be taught the correct procedures at your house. Some have never done laundry before and some have no concept of the correct amount of detergent to be used.
- h. It is the host parent's responsibility to see that the student is in proper school uniform (including jackets) before leaving for school.
- i. Host parents will need to inform their students regarding appropriate dress for their church.
- j. Host parents are responsible for the drop off and pick up of students for school and school functions.
- k. It is the responsibility of the host parent to make sure that the students have the supplies required for school (they are not required to pay for school supplies).
- l. Students are required to buy lunch at school unless there is a medical reason they cannot eat the school lunches. If that is the case they should pay for the lunch groceries if they want to bring a lunch.
- m. Host parents should make sure hair cuts are within school codes at all times. Do not let your student talk you out of a haircut just because they don't like the school code.
- n. Laptop computers are not to be in the students' bedrooms at all. Any computer activity must be supervised by the school or host parent. Students who spend too much time on the computer neglect physical activity and social engagement. Wisdom should be used regarding other technological devices. Ipods and similar devices are

hard to monitor because much of the music is in their language. Be careful that they are not used excessively or to avoid family interaction.

D. Meeting academic needs

- a. Most, if not all, of the students will need fairly aggressive tutoring in the beginning just because studying in English is so different than just taking English as a class. One of the biggest helps is to outline or summarize chapters for them. This helps them not to be so overwhelmed with the wordiness of the chapters. Gradually wean yourself so that they are doing more and more of the summarizing so they don't become dependent on you making things easy for them.
- b. Be available to help them with homework. Most difficulty is in the area of vocabulary.
- c. Keep in contact with the teachers to monitor your student's progress. In the event that grades begin to fall, schedule a conference as soon as possible with the teacher and a member of the international office.
- d. Many of these students are greatly concerned about grades and feel it is a disgrace to them and their parents if they fail. It is important that we see failing grades as an emergency situation. Students who are having difficulty are likely to resort to cheating in an effort to keep up. Keep an eye out for any indicators that your student is not doing their own work and address it immediately if you suspect cheating.

II. Host Parent compensation

A. Host parents will receive a monthly stipend of \$500 to help defray the cost of providing for their student.

- a. Host parent checks will be disbursed around the 5th of the month or as soon as the student has paid if they haven't paid by the 5th.
- b. Host parents are paid August through May. Many of your students won't arrive until the last week of August and some may stay through the first week of June. We do not charge for the few days in June.

- c. If a student plans to stay for summer they will be required to pay \$500 per month for June and July.
- d. If a student moves out of your home in the middle of the month you may be required to give half of that host fee to the new host parent.

B. Host parents may decide to donate all or part of their services rather than receive compensation.

- a. Host parents should not feel obligated to donate services they cannot afford to donate.
- b. If a host parent decides to donate their services it does not mean that they can't change their mind the following year.

III. Interacting with the parents of your international student.

A. Some parents may want to have a very involved relationship with the host parents of their student. This is fine as long as there are a few things to beware of:

- a. Do not enter into personal agreements or financial arrangements outside of the school. Don't let the parent try to bargain for your services by offering you either more or less money for the particulars of their child. All fees are to be paid through the school. This protects you from being taken advantage of in many ways.
- b. Many times your student has to translate between you and their parents. This is usually fine, but if a problem arises be careful of allowing your student to be the only interpreter between you and the parent. Things can become very one sided in that instance. If you suspect a problem contact the international office.
- c. Some parents want to micromanage their student's affairs. If you can be diplomatic lovingly remind them that you have things under control and will protect their child like one of your own. If their interference makes you uncomfortable contact the international office.
- d. Some parents assume that since you are keeping their child you must have room to accommodate them as well should they decide to visit. Some may even stay for extended periods of time if you allow it. You

are not obligated to host family members of your student. While it is a very nice gesture if you have the room it can be very stressful if you don't. Don't be afraid to tell them you don't have room. You may politely suggest a hotel nearby and suggest that while they are here the student can stay at the hotel with them if they wish.

B. Some parents don't get involved at all.

- a. Some parents will never interfere, contact you, or even seem to acknowledge you as their child's host parent. Don't be offended if this happens. Usually it is because they feel very insecure of their English skills and would prefer to just communicate with their child.
- b. Whether they communicate or not they are very thankful for you and the role you have in the life of their child.
- c. If there is a problem they will find a way to communicate with you.

IV. Activities governed by the organization

A. Dating: We prefer that our international students do not date at all. However, there are times that despite our wishes or best intentions relationships will develop.

- a. Students who do go out should always go in a group and not just a boy and a girl. A boy and a girl should never be alone in a car.
- b. Host parents should research the boy or girl in question just as if they were dating their son or daughter.
- c. Wise curfews should be made and enforced.
- d. The student's parents should be aware and approve of the relationship.

B. Driving or riding in cars with other students.

- a. International students will not be allowed to drive or have cars unless they are seniors living with a family member.
- b. Students should not ask host parents to teach them to drive.
- c. Students living with host parents are not allowed to have cars or drive regardless of age.

- d. International students should not ride in cars of other students without the express permission of their host parent (for every instance).
- e. Students wishing to leave campus with another student must have a written note from the host parent.

C. Church attendance and behavior

- a. All international students are required to attend the Saturday night services. This will be a part of their Bible grade. Students will not be excused for more than one service a month without a deduction in grade.
- b. If the host parent is unable to bring the student they are responsible to find alternative transportation for their students.
- c. All international students and host parents are expected to attend at least Sunday morning church. Students are to attend with their host parent. If they want to go to a Spanish, Korean, Chinese, etc. church they are to do that at times other than Sunday morning.
- d. Students are to be respectful and quiet during services and should not wear hats in church, use cell phones to talk or text, or listen to music players during services.

D. SAT prep

- a. Some of the students will be enrolled in SAT classes on Saturdays. This is usually the Korean students, but it may include others.
- b. Transportation to and from class is the responsibility of the host parent. Carpooling is probably the most convenient so that all parents don't have to go every time.

E. Computers

- a. We would prefer that students not bring computers at all. That being said, most of them will have them anyway because their parents see it as an essential of their education and communication.
- b. Students who do have their own computers are not allowed to have them in their bedrooms ever. There is too much available that tempts our students to be unwise morally in that area. If we require

them to use computers only in public areas we can help eliminate that temptation.

- c. Remember that very little of what students are doing on the computer is actually academic. Be wise in restricting computer time so that other endeavors can be pursued.
- d. Computers are subject to inspection at any time. Any student whose computer is found to have pornography will have their computer taken up and will lose the computer privilege.

F. Dress code (include school jackets)

- a. Dress code is established by the school and is not open to interpretation.
- b. It is the responsibility of the host parent to make sure the student is in appropriate uniform before they leave for school.
- c. Not getting laundry done is not a good reason to be out of uniform.
- d. Excessive dress code citations can result in fines. These are above what the student pays for tuition and must be paid by the student in the business office.
- e. Boys are not allowed any piercings at all. Girls are allowed piercings in ears only. Students who arrive with inappropriate pierced jewelry will have to remove it for the duration of their stay here. (Do not allow them to wear them on weekends or after school).

G. Music and movies

- a. Like any kids, international kids away from home, will want to stretch the parameters of society. It is our responsibility to maintain godly standards regarding media influence with our students.
- b. Regardless of what the student tells you, they should never be allowed to watch "R" rated movies or movies with vulgar or demonic themes even if they have a rating below "R".
- c. Host parents should be a positive influence in their speech, music, and movie selection. Remember that what we allow our children will enjoy to excess.

H. Events in which international students are expected to participate:

- a. Students are required to attend and participate in the Saturday evening international student service and student activities planned by the international department.
- b. Students are expected to attend and participate in international chapel services.
- c. Students are expected to perform in the Christmas television show.
- d. Students are expected to attend Church on Sunday mornings with their host parent.

I. Injury/illness

- a. In the event of illness or injury you can take your student to the nearest clinic or emergency room if required.
- b. Some students have international student insurance and some have insurance in their home country. Most of these plans require them to pay for care up front and then be reimbursed once the forms have been turned in. If the student has a credit card - that is the best way to handle the expense. They can pay right then and there is a receipt that can be accessed from the credit card company.
- c. In the rare event that a student does not have a credit card, they need to call their family and find out how they want to handle payment. They can usually wire funds or pay by credit card over the phone.
- d. Host parents are not expected to pay medical bills for students.

J. Host parent out of town

- a. Occasionally a host parent may need to go out of town at such a time or place that the student cannot go with them. If that is the case it is the responsibility of the host parent to find someone their student can stay with until they return.
- b. Usually the best option for finding someone is to check with other host parents and see if they can help you out.

- c. As a last resort, if you cannot find anyone you can ask the international office to help you find someone. Please do not ask this at the last minute. We can't work miracles.

K. Dual Credit

- a. Students can only participate in the dual credit program if they have been approved by Dr. Bearinger.
- b. Students involved must be able to provide transportation to and from San Jacinto College during the school day.
- c. Students that leave campus and do not go to the college will be dismissed from the program.

V. Areas the host parent sets the parameters

There are many areas of instruction that may be unique to your particular household. We encourage you to set parameters that you are comfortable with and refer to us if you are having difficulty.

- A. Students have different ideas about what is a comfortable temperature in the house.** Be sure to explain your household rules regarding: opening windows, changing the thermostat, use of fans, or use of space heaters.
- B. Many of the students will have their own cell phones.** Those that do not may try to get you to add them to your plan. Ultimately this is up to you, but keep in mind that you will be liable if they decide not to pay their portion or want to cancel the contract early. We think it is best that they go through their own parents to set up a phone plan.
- C. Whether they have their own phone or not, you still set the parameters for phone usage.**
- D. Students may need you to help set up a bank account that their parents can deposit money to for them.**
- E. Students should not miss school without the host parent's permission.**
 - a. Student cannot decide they are staying home, they should ask the host parent for permission if they are sick.

- b. Students should not stay home because they are not ready for a test, or they have incomplete homework.
- c. Some of the international girls get very sick with their monthly cycle. Use your wisdom about whether it is bad enough to warrant them staying home.
- d. Students who just refuse to get out of bed should face consequences.
- e. Be careful and alert to the number of absences your student is accruing. If they exceed the allowed number of days they may be required to take summer school to make up days.

F. Curfew

- a. Host parents should set curfews for their students like they would for their own children. These students often don't realize the danger of being out after dark, so they must be given safer parameters.
- b. I tell my children that anything godly can be done before 10:00. That is a good rule of thumb. There shouldn't be too many occasions where being out late is needed.
- c. You may choose whether or not your student can spend the night with a friend, just make sure you have checked out the home like you would for your own child.
- d. It is good to have your student do chores at home especially if your children have chores. Some may not want to do them, but they generally will not complain if the assignments are fair.

VI. Hosting students from other programs

- A. We discourage host parents from hosting from more than one program at a time.** This divides our focus and makes it much more difficult to manage the schedules of each.
- B. We respectfully ask that you do not volunteer to host a student who has been dismissed from our program.** This can create ill feelings between you and the school, or the student and us.

C. We also discourage host parents from continuing to house a student after they have graduated from high school and are in college. We realize that as you make these students a part of your life you may want to continue that relationship, however each time that happens we lose a potential host family for our incoming high school students. This is an area you must prayerfully consider and do what you feel God wants you to do.

VII. American Etiquette

- A. There are a lot of rules that govern American etiquette; therefore, we do not expect students to master all of them immediately.** These are the ones we feel to be the most important and that will enable your student to be regarded as polite and well-behaved.
- B. Please remind your student that it is entirely possible that they will see Americans breaking some of the rules we outline for them.** It does not mean that the rule should be disregarded and considered unnecessary; it simply means that there are some rude Americans.
- C. We encourage you to review these rules occasionally with your student so that they can develop good habits and so that they will be reminded of appropriate speech and behavior.**

Rules of American Etiquette

1. When responding to any adult, you must answer by saying "yes, Ma'am" or "No, Ma'am" for females and "yes, sir" or "no, sir" for males.
2. Always make eye contact when being spoken to.
3. When an adult asks a question - always answer. If you don't understand the question you can say, "I'm sorry I don't understand", or "could you repeat that please?" Never just say, "what?"
4. If you are asked a question in conversation, you should ask a question in return.

5. When you cough, sneeze, or burp, turn your head away from others and cover your mouth with the full part of your hand or the crook of your elbow.
6. Do not smack your lips, “tsk,” roll your eyes, or show any other type of disrespect with gestures.
7. Always say, “thank you,” when given something.
8. When you receive something, do not insult the gift or the giver. Be thankful and polite whether it is something you like or not.
9. Gentlemen should never wear hats inside a building that is not a sports facility. The rule is the same for ladies unless the hat is a dress hat that is a part of the outfit.
10. Gentlemen should always respect and care for ladies. Open doors for them, carry packages for them, allow them to go first, etc.
11. Guys should never hit girls; not even when joking.
12. You should not speak in a language that others in the group do not understand. There are some situations when it is very rude to speak your native tongue.
 - a. in the car with your host family
 - b. in your host home when members of the host family are present
 - c. to your classmate in front of your teacher
 - d. when you are angry
 - e. when you don’t want someone in the room to know what you are saying
 - f. when there is only one or two in the group who don’t understand you
13. Be on time. When you are given a departure or arrival time it is very rude to keep people waiting.

Mealtimes:

11. You should not ask your host/hostess to cook something different for you than is being served to the others.
12. You should not refuse to eat what has been prepared and then cook for yourself later.
13. You should not fix yourself a snack after school that will make you not hungry at mealtime.
11. When you first sit down for a meal, immediately place the napkin in your lap. If your silverware is wrapped in a napkin, unwrap it as soon as you sit down and place the napkin in your lap.
12. You should not begin eating until everyone has been seated and the prayer has been given. If it is a buffet style meal, do not begin serving until after the prayer.
13. Never place your elbows on the table.

14. Use one hand to eat, unless you are cutting or buttering food. Never have your fork in one hand and a glass in the other.
15. Do not smack your lips or chew noisily.
16. When you are finished eating place your napkin on the table to the left of your plate.
17. When you are finished eating do not leave the table without asking to be excused. Then when you are excused, clear your dishes and trash in whatever way your hostess requires. Always ask if you can help with clean up even if the response is always the same.

At School

18. Smile and say, "hello," when you pass teachers and staff members in the hallway.
19. Do not ask for rewards for good grades or good behavior.
20. When grading other student's papers, give only correct grades.
21. Follow along when we read together in class.
22. Do not work on anything but assignments for this class while in this class.
23. Answer all written questions with complete sentences.
24. Respect other students' comments, opinions, and ideas.
25. If someone in the class wins a game or does something well, congratulate that person.
26. If you win or do well at something, do not brag. If you lose, do not show anger.
27. Listen and obey your teacher the first time a request is made.
28. Pay attention to assignment and project criteria.
29. Do your own work. Copying homework is cheating. It is cheating for the one who is copying and for the one who is allowing the copying.
30. Be on time to class.
31. Be prepared for class. Bring all of your class supplies with you. Do not ask to leave the class to get your supplies.
32. Always ask permission personally for anything that requires a change in the normal order of things. Do not assume that one person getting permission is a blanket permission for everyone.
33. Read memos and listen to announcements. Know what is going on that pertains to you.

- D. In additions to the rules of etiquette please encourage your student to speak English as much as possible.** It is obviously easier for them to speak their native tongue, but they will not improve in English unless they practice it.
- E. In some countries bathroom habits are different than ours.** Patiently explain how you would like bathroom matters handled in your home.
- a. In some countries they are not allowed to use toilet paper.
 - b. In some countries if they do use toilet paper they are not allowed to flush it, they simply put it in the trash can.
 - c. In some cultures it is appropriate to wet the whole bathroom when washing or showering.
 - d. Some may need you to explain what should and should not go down the drain. (This is especially true in the kitchen)
 - e. You may also need to discuss how you want feminine products disposed of.
- F. You may need to advise your student on appropriate dress in and outside of the house including being modest when coming from the shower.**

VIII. What to do if a problem arises that you feel you need help with

A. Airport trips

- a. We would like for host parents to pick their student up from the airport when they arrive and take them to the airport when they depart.
- b. If the host parent is unable to arrange for airport transportation they can call the international office to see if we can help facilitate the pick up or drop off, however, keep in mind that we will not have the bus this year so there will be no large vehicle to pick up large groups.
- c. If no one is available, there are airport shuttles that can pick up and drop off people. This is not an option for a student's initial arrival

B. Cheating

- a. If you find out that your student has been cheating please contact the International office immediately so that we can address it.
- b. If your student reports the cheating of someone else, please notify the school and let us handle it – do not contact the other student's parents.
- c. Keep in mind that kids under stress are more likely to resort to cheating. Keep an eye on your student's emotional well being to help avoid this issue.

C. Tutoring

- a. Please keep an eye on your student's academic progress and arrange tutorials if they appear to be falling behind.
- b. If the teacher is not willing or able to provide tutoring contact the international office so we can set up appropriate tutorials.

D. Smoking/Drinking/Drugs

- a. Historically our students have not had too many of these issues.
- b. Be alert to behaviors that would indicate a problem.
- c. Contact the international office if you think there is a problem and you need help dealing with it.
- d. Not allowing students to go to gas stations unattended will limit their ability to acquire these items.

E. Vandalism

- a. Vandalism is a heart issue that stems from unresolved anger or selfishness.
- b. Students involved in this type of activity will be required to make restitution and to counsel with the international staff.
- c. If the vandalism is on school property the school may choose to dismiss the student.

IX. The International Office

A. Your International Team

Your international student team consists of:

Patricia Gehret – Director of ICEM (phone: 832 723 5659)
pgehret@yahoo.com

Hannah Gehret – International student coordinator and Korean Dorm
Dean (phone: 832 893 5182) cnpark@msn.com

Jill Johnson – International Student Coordinator (phone: 832 771 9959)
Jillyjohn1@yahoo.com

Scotty Henderson – ICEM Church Pastor ljhend1@solutia.com

Ron and Becky Dansby – International worship leaders
rondansby@gmail.com

B. Hours

- a. The international office is open during all school hours. Mon-Fri
- b. If you have an emergency after school hours you can call Patricia, Hannah, or Jill.

C. Student Services

- a. There are computers in the international office that the students are allowed to use. If they need the computers to do homework, please have them prepare in advance and not expect to wait until the last minute.
- b. Tutoring is offered through the international office if they need extra help.
- c. The international office will help with reference letters and essays for college applications when needed.

D. Lunches and lunch time

- a. All students are required to go to the lunch room whether they want to eat lunch or not.
- b. Students are required to buy lunch at school unless there is a medical reason they cannot eat the school lunches. If that is the case they should pay for the lunch groceries if they want to bring a lunch.
- c. Lunch tickets can be purchased by the day, week, or month.