



Host Family Guidelines

Serving as a host family for an international student attending WCHS is an important facet of the WCHS international program. The rewards are great in terms of widened views and understanding of other cultures, to say nothing of the long-term relationships that can develop. The following information should provide you with some guidelines for your role as host parent.

Host Family Qualifications

WCHS will only allow our international students to stay with Christian families in good standing with the school. We prefer that the students are placed with current WCHS families but are willing to consider other families with strong recommendations.

Host Family Responsibilities

The host family will provide for the student in their home the following: food, normal household amenities, and sleeping arrangements. They also will provide or arrange for transportation to and from school each day and to various school events. We ask that the host family make a one-year commitment to hosting an international student.

International Student Expectations

The student should be treated as a member of the family. He or she should have to take on the same household responsibilities as the other children in the family. The host family should sit down with the student and explain the family's rules and expectations.

Finances

The student will assume the cost of transportation to, from, and within the United States. The student should be prepared to pay for such things as school trips, materials for class, personal items, gifts, clothing, travel, entertainment, etc. It is not expected that the host family will provide any expense other than housing, regular meals, and transportation to and from school functions. Each host family will be compensated \$600 per month to offset the additional living expenses.

Travel

While the host family is under no obligation to provide the student with travel experiences, the host family is expected to include the student in local family activities.

Health Insurance

WCHS requires that each student purchase health/medical insurance before he or she enters the country. The host parents will be given a medical release form for the student, along with contacts and phone numbers. A copy of the release will be in the student's school file.

Arrival

The student is instructed to arrive in Portland approximately a week before the first day of the semester. You will be given the flight arrangements and should plan to meet your student at the airport. As soon as possible after arrival, an appointment should be scheduled for the student to meet with Scott Ball to arrange a schedule of courses.

Language

During the early stages you will become aware of any language problems that may exist. Most international students have studied English to a considerable extent, and fluency is a requirement for admission. However, at best it will still be a “foreign” tongue, a language learned from books rather than daily use. It is important that any problems that arise from language difficulties be dealt with quickly. Be certain that the student understands what is being said about such things as school assignments, household expectations, geographical directions, etc. You should also make the effort to be certain that you understand what the student is saying to you.

Homesickness

The language problem, if it exists, often is linked with a phenomenon that many host families face sooner or later: homesickness. After the novelty of the new environment wears off, the student may feel suddenly alone in a strange land. Contact with someone who speaks the native tongue can help. But the best remedy is a full program of activities, possibly a side trip to some point of interest, or even just a social event.

Personal Adjustment

In all questions or situations that might arise, it should be remembered that the student is expected to adapt to the host family. The host family is under no obligation to adapt to the student. However, host families should be aware that some individuals adapt to new situations faster and with greater ease than others. The key to success is an open mind, loving atmosphere, and flexibility. Similarly, some ethnic or racial groups have certain dietary restrictions or observances that host families should be aware of and respect as part of the cultural exchange. If the host family sees a problem building, they should feel free to contact the appropriate person at the school for assistance. If a situation develops between the family and the student that cannot be resolved, the student will be moved to another family.

Religion

WCHS sees our international program as an opportunity to reach out to nonbelievers. Some of our students will have a personal relationship with Christ, but others will not. The students are enrolling at WCHS with the understanding that they will be attending Bible class everyday and will be living with a Christian family. The students also know that they will be expected to become an active member of their host family. So the student should be expected to attend church when the host family attends church, etc.

Summary

The responsibility can be summarized in a few simple precepts:

- Meet your student on arrival and make the student feel at home in the new environment as a part of your family.
- Help the student achieve language mastery.
- Involve the student in obligations similar to those laid down for your own family members.
- Be tolerant of cultural differences and be willing to broaden your family’s perspective.