

# International Student & Host Family Handbook



Heartland Christian School  
810 S. Cedar  
Belton, Missouri 64012



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*Heartland Christian School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and scholarship programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.*

# **STUDENT PREPARATIONS**

Dear Heartland Christian School International Student:

You have completed your application and your TOEFL test. Now it's time to get excited about your upcoming adventure. You will probably have a lot of questions, worries and excitement about your upcoming journey. Therefore, we encourage you to read this book carefully and ask questions if you do not understand what it says. You may receive contact from your host family soon. They will also help you prepare for your arrival.

## **What to bring with you**

It is important that you take the time to learn about the climate of Kansas City and that you pack accordingly. Kansas City experiences the four seasons of fall, winter, spring and summer. While packing for your journey, keep in mind that what you bring must also go back with you, so don't bring more than you need. It is important to remember that shipping is expensive and that airlines are becoming increasingly strict about luggage size and weight. You will need to be able to carry all your own luggage items by yourself both when arriving and departing the USA.

In addition to the clothing that you pack, you will also need to bring the following items with you on your flight to the USA:

- The name, address and phone number of your host family.
- Your passport, your I-20 form/F-1 form and SEVIS Fee Receipt (make a copy of these to carry separately in your luggage).
- Your airline ticket and travel itinerary (make a copy of these to carry separately in your luggage).
- Your health insurance card and information.
- Your parent's telephone number and the telephone number of someone they know who speaks English.
- A Power of Attorney form for your host family (if not already at HCS)
- Vaccination documentation if there are any changes since you applied.
- See the vaccination section.
- An official translated copy of your most recent grades.
- Spare glasses or contacts.
- A copy of any prescription (medical or optical) that you need.
- Travelers' checks or some currency of your new country for emergencies.
- Photos and information about your country; pictures of your family, home and friends.

# **ARRIVAL INFORMATION**

## **Arrival Information for Host Families**

Most international students will arrive in August shortly before school begins. As Heartland Christian School receives the final details on the student's flight information, we will share it with you. Please call the airline before departing for the airport to avoid any unnecessary delays.

Host families are expected to pick up their students at the airport.

### **Tips for your Student's Arrival:**

- Make a sign with the student's name to help them find you.
- Greet them with smiles and warm gestures - they have been traveling for a very long time and have left behind their family and friends.
- Speak slowly and utilize hand gestures for the first few days. The students have good English abilities, but this will be their first experience living it.
- Try to help them adjust to local time immediately. If they can stay awake until 7:00 or 8:00 PM the first night it will help their jet lag recovery.
- Welcome them into your home and show them around. However, avoid going over the house rules the first day. Give them a day to settle in and begin thinking in English.
- Make sure to cover the house rules within the first week. It will make for a much smoother experience. Remember it is better to overstate than understate! Please WRITE down the expectations and rules for the students and encourage open communication.
- Give them a tour of your town or neighborhood. Show them where the local coffee shop, bank, park, library and supermarket are located.

### **Important Documents:**

Many students will be traveling on electronic tickets. However, a number of students will also be traveling with paper tickets. We ask the host families to remind their students to keep the following items in a safe place: the plane ticket, the passport and the 1-20 visa form.

Also, the student needs to immediately give you a copy of the Power of Attorney from their parents and a copy of their insurance information.

## **Arrival Information for Students**

Your host family will greet you at the airport upon arrival. Your host family will have a sign with your name on it to help you find them. Most likely, you will be tired when you arrive. In order to adjust to USA time immediately, make an attempt to stay awake until 7:00 or 8:00 PM the first night. It will be much easier for you to adjust to the new time change if you can stay awake until then.

## **Your First Days in the USA**

It can be difficult immersing yourself into a new language, new family, and home. Don't be worried if you feel overwhelmed. You will probably miss your home, and your family and friends. The best way to adjust is to stay busy by immersing yourself in your new life. Let yourself get excited about all the new things you will experience in the next year. If you find yourself upset or sad, it's best to talk with your host family or one of your teachers at school. We are here to help you have the best experience possible.



# **STUDENT GUIDELINES**

## Introduction

Welcome to Heartland Christian School (HCS). It is important to read these guidelines thoroughly and ask questions if you do not understand something. Heartland Christian School wants your stay in the USA to be a positive one which will provide you with memories to last a lifetime. As with any new adventure, there will be times when things do not seem as you initially expected. This handbook attempts to give you information on what to expect, how to deal with various situations, and what your responsibilities are as an exchange student in a foreign country

Here are some situations when you should talk to the HCS contact person:

- When you are experiencing culture shock.
- When you are having a problem with your Host Family.
- When you are bursting with enthusiasm and you need to share.
- When you are planning to travel.
- Anytime you need help.

## Basic Student Guidelines

### Culture Shock

Many students suffer from culture shock when they first arrive in their host country.

Some symptoms of culture shock are:

- Becoming more shy and quiet than usual.
- Withdrawing and feeling sad.
- Feeling frustrated even in situations which are not new to you.
- Being critical of your host country, making comparisons with your homeland.
- Clinging to a host family member or friend instead of reaching out to others.
- Feeling tired or ill all the time; stomach aches or headaches are common.

It is important to realize what is happening to you and that it is common for people in new surroundings to have some of these feelings and remember that your host family and school contact person are there to help you through these times. Most importantly, do something to help relieve these feelings, such as:

- Talking to your host family or school contact person about your feelings.
- Getting involved with an activity.
- Getting some exercise (this is one of the fastest ways to feel better).
- Doing something for someone else to get your mind off of yourself.
- Thinking about all the wonderful experiences you will have during your stay.

These are some things which are usually not helpful:

- Calling and e-mailing home every time that you feel upset is not a good idea; it makes things worse and makes your family upset that they can't help you.
- Shutting yourself in your room with music, pictures, letters, etc. from home.
- Thinking about what you are missing at home while you are gone.

### Appreciate your Host Family

The host family is inviting you into their home and accepting you as a member of their family. There are many little things you can do to show them your respect and appreciation for hosting you such as:

- Remembering to say "Please", "Thank you", and "May I?"

- Learning how your host family celebrates special occasions and holidays and join in the celebration.
- Making a calendar of your host family members' birthdays, anniversaries and other special days and recognize them with a card.
- Showing appreciation toward your host family without being asked to do so. This can easily be done by saying "thank you". It can also include occasionally doing something unexpected such as: renting a movie, buying pizza, treating your host family to ice cream; offering to wash the car; and weeding the garden. A thoughtful gesture can also be a homemade card that expresses your feelings.
- Keeping host family matters private. You should never discuss your host family's private affairs with friends or acquaintances. If you have a concern, talk to your school contact person.
- Remembering to do your chores without having to be asked.

### **The Adjustment Cycle**

There is a pattern of adjustment to life in a home stay that most students experience during their first year living abroad. Some students may have already lived in the USA and they may not go through as much of an adjustment process as those that are just arriving. Please also note that not all students go through each cycle nor will all students have this exact experience. However, this adjustment cycle is fairly typical and it helps to know about it ahead of time.

Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
1		2		3			4		5	

#### **Cycle 1: "I'm really here!"**

You have been getting ready for months and now you have arrived. Everything is a new and exciting adventure and you are the center of attention in your new family.

#### **Cycle 2: "Settling in"**

Things have settled down to a normal routine. You are no longer going to new places.

You are treated like one of the family members; you may have responsibilities that you never had at home. School may be more difficult than you had imagined. Your host family has rules, chores, curfews, etc. and you begin to wonder why you ever wanted to be an exchange student.

#### **Cycle 3: "What am I doing here?" or the "Down period"**

You may feel somewhat lonely, isolated, or homesick and depressed with the approach of the holidays. You miss your friends and family and everything familiar.

#### **Cycle 4: "I'll be leaving my new country soon!"**

Things are going much better. Your English has improved so that now you are thinking and, perhaps, dreaming, in English. You are getting involved in activities and making friends. You have many things left to do before you go home, and you feel that your time is limited.

### **Cycle 5: "It's time to leave my new home"**

You are now very comfortable physically and emotionally in your "home" and leaving will be difficult. You have many great memories and the idea of returning to your homeland leaves you sad and happy at the same time. You wonder what it will be like to go back to your family and friends and if things will be the same as they were before you left.

### **Making Friends**

Many students arrive at a home stay with the idea of making many lifelong friends in their host country. The students who accomplish this goal all have several things in common. They are the ones who talk to people every day; smile at their classmates; ask questions; participate in activities or sports teams; are interested in others; and are interesting to others. They are usually the first one to smile and talk. They do not worry too much about their language skills and talk to everyone (and their skills improve readily because of this).

A few things to remember about making friends:

- You are entering into a situation where the people are already established in their friendships. You want to join the group.
- If you spend your time speaking in your own language to exchange students from your own country, other students will feel left out and will leave you alone.
- Taking classes where you work in teams such as art and drama is a good way to meet people.
- "Hello, how are you?" is a common greeting in the USA, but it does not easily lead to further conversation. People are not considered rude when they say "fine" and keep walking.

### **Religion**

Religious activities play an important role in the life of families at Heartland Christian School. Heartland Christian School is a religious school and it is required that exchange students participate in religious classes, services and other activities. It is NOT required that students conform to these religious beliefs but it is required that students join host families in whatever religious and/or cultural events that they participate in as they are often also associated with the school.

### **Hygiene**

It is important to know that people in the USA are very particular about personal hygiene. They are offended by body odor. Most Americans shower daily, wash or clean their clothing often and change their underwear daily. They also brush their teeth at least twice a day. In order to fit in at home, school and in the community, it is important for you to follow the hygiene customs of your host country.

### **Health**

Students must be aware that differences in climate, living conditions and the stress associated with any major lifestyle change can lead to illness. It is important to eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get sufficient sleep while you are in your new country. This is extremely important in contributing to a successful experience.

Please be aware that good eating habits are vital to good health. Some students develop a fondness for processed foods or "junk food" while in the international program. This contributes to weight gain and to lack of energy and vitality. Eating a variety of foods and limiting the amount of junk foods you eat will help keep you healthy.

## **Contact Guidelines**

Exchange students are reminded to limit their time with students from their home country. While you are here we want you to focus your time and energy into your school, your host family and having a great time in the USA. Too much contact with your home country may be a distraction from your experience as an exchange student. We encourage you to spend time with other foreign exchange students in an environment where English is spoken.

Exchange students should limit the amount of time they talk with friends and family back home, including any cell and skype phone calls. Host families are asked to help set and enforce limits in this area. Exchange students are asked to comply with the host family's limits.

If a student lives with a family that allows them access to the internet or computer games, the student should limit the amount of non-academic computer/internet time each day. Abusing computer usage is a serious problem and students who spend too much time on the computer can be placed on disciplinary probation.

These guidelines have been developed to ensure a happy and successful stay with your host family. Students are not to have family members or friends from home visit them in the USA until the end of the program and when school has finished. If your parents are interested in visiting you, please ask them to wait until the end of the school term.

## **Finances**

For many of you, this will be the first time you have had to be responsible for so many expenses. It can be difficult to budget your money wisely, so please ask your HCS contact person if you need help. Under no circumstances should you lend money to or borrow money from your host family. Here are some financial suggestions:

### **Credit/Debit Cards**

You must come to the USA with a credit/debit card that you can use as a credit card or to withdraw cash from an ATM. Your natural parents can deposit money in your account in your home country. Make sure that the card can be used to withdraw cash. There will always be an occasion during your stay when you will need cash. Never give out your credit card number or debit card pin to anyone! If you make any purchases online with your credit card, delete your credit card information from the computer when you are done.

### **Bank Accounts**

If you are under the age of 18 you cannot open an American bank account under current Federal laws.

### **Learn to Budget**

Please budget your money wisely. Before you come, discuss with your parents what a reasonable monthly allowance is and how you will receive these funds. Remember that the first and last months of your stay will be more expensive than the rest, as well as holiday times around December. A reasonable estimate of monthly expenses might be \$200-\$250.

### **Budgeting your Finances**

Under no circumstances should you lend money to or borrow money from your host family members. You are responsible for the following expenses:

### Meals

Your host family will provide you with 3 meals a day and you will be allowed to pack a sack lunch for school. If you want to buy lunch at school, you must pay that cost. If you require special foods that are not part of your host family's normal diet, you are responsible for that cost.

### Entertainment

You are responsible for all entertainment expenses: movies, snacks, sports events, restaurant meals with friends; school events etc. An exception is if the host family explicitly says, "Our treat!"

### Travel and Excursions

You are responsible for any cost associated with travel activities.

### Personal Items

You are responsible for items such toothpaste, shampoo, makeup, deodorant and any personal hygiene products.

### Clothing

You are responsible for all clothing including winter jackets.

### School Expenses

You are responsible for all school expenses including class fees, sports fees, yearbooks, formals, and other special events.

### Transportation

Your host family is responsible for getting you to and from school. You must obtain permission from your host family to attend any events that will alter the before and/or after school driving schedule.

### Phone Calls

You are responsible for long distance telephone calls. Please arrange for a telephone card or use your own cell phone to call home. Your host family is not responsible to pay for your phone calls, and you are not allowed to dial direct from the phone of the host family.

### Unexpected Expenses

Remember to plan ahead so that you have enough money. Some previous students have been surprised with the expense of the following activities:

- Sports: There are fees to play sports at Heartland Christian School and you may need to purchase all or part of your sports uniform.
- School Formal: This is a special event held in the spring. There is a \$30-\$50 fee to attend school formals. Students wear fancy clothes and spend money on an expensive meal. Cost for the Spring Formal is about \$50 per person.
- Tax: Remember that a sales tax is added to the price marked on what you are buying. It's usually 9-10%.
- Insurance: Some insurance policies state that you must pay bills up to a certain amount; then be reimbursed later. Be familiar with your insurance policy and keep an emergency fund available in case you need money quickly.
- Medical Treatment: Please become familiar with the medical insurance that you have. Most of the student travel and medical insurance will not cover pre-existing treatments, dental cleaning, eye care or prescription drugs.

# **HOST FAMILY GUIDELINES**

## Philosophy

Our philosophy is to promote international goodwill and understanding through international homestay experiences. It's our belief that participation in international homestay will foster a significant understanding of the values and attitudes of foreign cultures, while at the same time exposing foreign students to the uniqueness and diversity of American life. Your family needs to be prepared to host the student from one week before school begins until one week after school ends.

## Basic Guidelines

1. Students should be welcomed as a family member and treated with the same amount of respect and compassion that you would give your own child. They should be expected to follow the family rules and pitch in with household chores in the same manner you would expect from an American son or daughter. However, students should not be expected to act as babysitters or housekeepers.
2. It's a good idea to familiarize the student with the family rules. When the student first arrives and a tour of the home is given, it is often helpful to write down certain rules of the house such as: when dinner is served, what is and isn't community food, how laundry is handled, what time the curfew is, etc. Taking time to write down the rules together can also be very helpful since it gives the student something to reflect on later.
3. It is perfectly acceptable to give your students an opportunity to explore your religion as part of their cultural exposure. You should expect your student to attend church with you.
4. A separate bed must be provided in a bedroom or enclosed room for the student. If a separate bedroom is unavailable, the student may share a room with one other host sibling of the same gender and similar age. The student's bed can not be placed in an open area such as a family room or furnished basement.
5. An adequate study space must be provided for the student to complete homework.
6. Up to three meals per day must be provided for the student, including a sack lunch on school days. If students wish to purchase lunch at school or go out to eat, they are responsible for these expenses.
7. The family must ensure that the student has transportation to and from school.
8. The host family should encourage the students to use after-school time in an appropriate manner.
9. A student's progress can often be enhanced by family members, who show interest in English conversation, ask questions about progress at school, and discuss adjustment to life in the USA.
10. Your student will bring their own spending money and their own credit/debit card. *Students and host families should not borrow money from each other.* Money misunderstandings can sabotage trust and harmony in student/host family relationship.

### Students are responsible for all personal expenses including:

- Additional meals outside of the 3 daily meals provided by the host family; buying school lunches; purchasing special foods and snacks not a part of the family's normal diet; and restaurant meals when it is not the family meal.
- Entertainment such as movies and sports events
- Travel and Excursions.
- Personal items like toothpaste, shampoo, makeup, deodorant, etc.

- All clothing including winter jackets.
  - School expenses including sports and special events.
  - Long distance telephone calls.
11. Students come here insured for medical and dental emergencies and liability. Therefore, host families should not pay medical or dental bills. The student's insurance card or information sheet will have the appropriate information for the student's reimbursement. It is necessary to submit all original receipts associated with the doctor visit, with claim form. Please see the "Insurance" section for more information.
  12. Guns are usually not a common part of other cultures. Families who have guns must keep them securely locked away. Adequate training must be provided to any student who will use firearms for recreation or for hunting. The host family should inform the school before student participates in any activity involving firearms.
  13. Students are not allowed to drive cars and are forbidden to ride on or drive motorcycles. Students wishing to pursue a United States driver's license will be required to complete a school permission application at the time of request.
  14. Students are prohibited from smoking, alcohol, and illegal drugs during their stay here.
  15. This is an educational homestay program, promising students the experience of living with an American family and attending an American high school. This is not a travel program and host families are not expected to provide a tour of the country for the students. All travel requests must be pre-approved by HCS, the host family and the student's natural parents. Please see the Travel Section of the handbook for more details.
  16. The family should be gracious in receiving gifts from the student's families. You are already providing the student with room and board and so it is not necessary for you to give gifts. If you want to give the students a present for his/her birthday or Christmas, then small gifts are appropriate.

## **Helping Your Student Adjust**

### **Culture Shock**

Some students may initially suffer from stress and culture shock. Do not panic. Instead, let your HCS contact person know if your student is eating poorly, withdrawing, or not communicating. Some students may be simply overwhelmed by their new surroundings, so the best thing they can do is to stay busy and keep their minds off of friends and loved ones back at home. Culture shock is not uncommon, and it will usually last around one to two weeks after arrival. During that time, students should limit phone calls and e-mails to home in order to focus their learning around their host family, school and local community.

### **Communication**

Communicating with your student is the most important step you can take in helping your student adjust to the new environment. Most students have three to five years of English grammar and reading, but their conversational English may be awkward and formal. When your student arrives, allow time to hear and speak English. Hearing another language requires hard work, but with your help and support your student will make great progress toward speaking clear and fluent English.

Every culture has a unique style of communication. Americans are more direct in speaking and use direct eye contact. In some Asian societies, this is considered impolite. Many students will say “yes” or “ok” even when they do not understand the instruction or the conversation. It is best to have the student repeat what was said to be sure that there is clear understanding. Be patient and understanding with your student in order to avoid turning small communication differences into larger communication problems.

Your student may arrive without the skills to use polite English grammar. They may not use "May I," "Please," or "Is it possible..." when stating a request. Please try not to interpret a direct request as a sign of rudeness. Example: "I go to store" may actually mean "May I go to the store?"

### **Food**

Some students from other cultures have had limited exposure to American food. We have learned that Asian students tend to prefer noodles, rice, potatoes, chicken, pork, cooked vegetables, and fresh fruit. European and Latin American students have had more exposure to our diet, but they also have their own food preferences and cooking styles. When your student arrives, talk to him or her about what sorts of foods they are accustomed to eating, so you have a better idea of their likes and dislikes. Also remember they are here to experience American culture. Asian students will “slurp” their noodles. You must tell them that this is considered to be rude in the American culture.

### **Household Rules and Expectations**

You need to familiarize your student to your home and how it works. Give them a tour and explain how to take a shower, how to use any essential gadgets, where everyone sleeps, and where the family eats. Don't take anything for granted. It is important to clearly explain the rules in great detail. It is important to go over these topics with your student:

Clarify your family's rules for inviting friends over for visits, meals, and parties.

- Be sure to let your student understand your expectations regarding leaving the house. He should let you know where he is going and when he'll be back before taking off with a friend or neighbor.
- You may also need to help the student understand the appropriate attire for different occasions and what rules apply to dating.
- Tell them what hours are acceptable for phone calls, computer use, and television viewing.
- Clearly inform your student about the family schedule: dinner time, study time, bed time, etc.
- Explain your family's table manners including who sets the table and who clears the dishes.
- Don't forget to let your student know about household chores, general pickup of clothes, making the bed, and washing clothes (they will not be familiar with American washing machines or dryers).
- We suggest you write down these rules with the student. Many students are overwhelmed upon arrival and it helps for them to have a written document to refer to as they continue to settle in to life with their host family.

### **Transportation**

Many students come from cultures where there is extensive public transportation. It's difficult for the student to have to constantly ask for help from the host family, especially for transportation. Help them understand the "carpool" concept, which will also get them started on new friendships.

### **Money**

Be sensitive to spending habits and money issues. Students may need help dealing with USA currency and/or help budgeting to make their money last. Problems may arise if the student and host siblings have significantly different amounts of money to spend, or if the student is used to a different economic lifestyle than that of the host family. Keep communicating and be open and sensitive to adjustments. Students and their host families should not borrow money from each other.

### **School**

Students are expected to take school seriously and complete their class work and homework to the best of their ability. Students are also dealing with a second language and many new concepts and approaches to familiar concepts. Motivation may vary due to individual skill levels, interests in certain subjects, and the fact that many students will not receive credit at home for their academic work here. Encourage your student to do his best, but beware of unrealistic expectations about performance and grades. If your student is struggling with school, please call your HCS contact person.

### **Activities**

Your student will get more from this experience if he gets involved with the family, school and community. Encourage participation in activities, and then try to support that participation, as you would with your own children. It means a lot to a student to have the host parents attend a play, track meet, art exhibit, etc. On the other hand, your student may opt out of an activity you have planned or may express preferences or opinions in a way that could hurt your feelings. Try not to take things personally. It's all part of adjusting to differences in language, style, attitudes, and seeking both individual independence and a place in the family. Be patient and know that things will work out.

### **Family**

Get involved with your student's family at home through letters, photos, even videos sent back and forth, and share your extended family with your student. This is one way you can enrich your lives. Americans are viewed as mobile and independent—you have a chance to show your student that extended family is important to us, too. Family holidays, reunions, weddings, etc. can be shared and can greatly enrich the long-term bond between your families.

On a final note, remember that cultures and beliefs vary widely around the world and even around some neighborhoods. Differences are not necessarily wrong. Try to discuss, understand and accept this diversity without judgment or criticism. Be clear about what behaviors are acceptable in this culture and in your home. Don't expect your student to be perfect. It is more reasonable to expect the student to have strengths and weaknesses just like everyone else.

Your experience will be a rewarding one if you communicate and care about each other.



# **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

## **Enrollment in High School**

### **Registration**

Heartland Christian School will help the student register for classes. There are several important points to remember:

1. Students are required to enroll in an English class.
2. Students are also required to take a full schedule of classes, early dismissal or late arrival is not allowed.
3. Attendance and participation in religious faith classes and/or events is required.
4. Some foreign students want to return to HCS to seek a graduation diploma. If you want to graduate from HCS, you will need to complete all Missouri AND HCS requirements for graduation. One exception is a foreign language requirement may be waived upon request.

### **What to take to Registration:**

1. School transcripts
2. Health records (if anything has changed from the time of the application)
3. Medication Authorization Form(s) - if any
4. Student passport (F-1 visa included)

### **School Transcripts**

The student must bring to registration an official transcript translated into English and criteria for translating foreign grades to the American system.

### **Immunizations**

As part of the registration process the school will check the student's immunization record (in the student medical and dental examination report). The following shows what is required by the state of Missouri. The student should make every effort to have these required immunizations before coming to the USA. If you do not have them all, you will be required to get them at your own expense before October first.

**4+ DTaP/DTP/DT:** (Last dose on or after fourth (4th) birthday and last dose of pediatric pertussis before seventh (7th) birthday. Maximum needed: six (6) doses.

**Tdap:** Tdap, which contains pertussis vaccine is required for grades 8th -12th.

**MCV (Meningococcal Conjugate):** Two doses are required unless the first dose was administered to the student who was 16 years of age or older, in which case only one does is required.

**2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)** First dose must be given on or after 12 months of age.

**3+Polio:** (Last dose on or after fourth (4th) birthday. The interval between the next-to- last and last dose should be at least six months. For grades 5th - 12th, if all 4 doses are administered appropriately and received prior to the 4th birthday, an additional dose is not needed. Any combination of 4 doses of IPV and OPV by 4-6 years of age constitutes a complete series. Maximum needed: four (4) doses.

**3+ Hepatitis B:** Students who are 11-15 years of age may receive two doses of adult formulation Merck Recombivax Hepatitis B vaccine on the following schedule:

Dose 1: initial visit

Dose 2: 4-6 months after Dose 1

**Varicella:** Kindergarten - 4th Grade 2 doses. As satisfactory evidence of disease, a licensed health care provider may sign and place with the school a written statement documenting the month and year of previous varicella (chickenpox) disease. Grades 5th - 9th 1 dose. As satisfactory evidence of disease, a parent/guardian or MD or DO may sign and place on file with the school a written statement documenting the month and year of previous varicella (chickenpox) disease.

### **Medication Authorization Form**

Students needing medication to be given during school hours must have a medication authorization form on file in the student health record. There must be one form filled out and signed by the physician and parent for each medication to be given at school. For medication brought from the student's home country, the student must have the Medication Authorization form filled out by the student's physician. If the student needs medication while in the United States, the Host Parents will fill out the Medication Authorization Form using the Medical Power of Attorney.

### **Important Information about Attending College in the USA:**

The purpose of this program is to expose you to American life and not to facilitate your entrance into college. You are welcome to visit colleges while you are in the USA. However, your host family is not obligated to help you with any research or preparation for USA college/university entrance. We cannot make any arrangements for you to stay for a college program.

### **Tips for Students: The School Experience**

Schools in the USA may be very different from your schools at home. Here are some important points to be aware of:

#### **Exchange students in your school**

HCS normally has several exchange students. You are encouraged to make friends with all students at HCS, both US and foreign. However, you are only allowed to speak English while at school. Failure to speak English may lead to disciplinary action by the school. Make every effort to avoid just hanging out with students from your native country, but instead, try to get to know the American students.

#### **Attendance**

Students are required to attend every class, every day. If you are too sick to go to school, you must speak with your host family about missing class. Your host family serves as your parents while you are in the US. You cannot miss school and stay at home without their permission.

#### **Timeliness**

You are also expected to be on time for every class. Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated and you will risk being placed on probation for such behavior.

#### **Attitude**

You are an ambassador for your country. You are expected to represent yourself in this way when you are in class. Listen and follow the teacher's instructions. Ask them for help when you do not understand something.

#### **Homework**

There will be daily homework assignments. This will be a big change for many of you who are not used to handing in assignments every day. Students must complete all required homework and class assignments. If you do not understand an assignment, you must ask the teacher for help.

### **Grades**

All students are required to have passing grades in every class. Students with failing grades may be required to pay for a tutor until their grades improve.

### **Friends**

The first few days at school are very important in your attempts to make friends. Be sure to smile. One easy way to start making friends is to ask people for help. If you can't find your way to the gym or cafeteria, just ask someone. Then you can try to have a conversation with them. If you are friendly and talkative, you will find it easy to make friends.

### **Sports and Activities**

One of the easiest ways to meet new people is by joining a club or sport at school. Ask your HCS contact person for more information. Please talk with your host family before joining something new if it requires times when you will need their help to attend practices and events.

# **RULES & REGULATIONS**

## Rules for Students

It is important for both students and host families to thoroughly read and understand these rules. These rules were devised to give everyone the foundation for a successful, safe and satisfying homestay experience. Continuous failure to abide by any of the following regulations may result in the dismissal from the program and termination of the F-1 visa.

1. USA Laws: Students must abide by the laws of the host country.
2. Drug Possession: The possession or use of illegal drugs is prohibited. The possession, sale or use of illegal drugs is considered a serious crime in the United States. Persons violating drug laws will be tried, and, in most cases, jailed.
3. Alcohol: Students are not allowed to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages. The legal drinking age in most of the USA is 21. It is illegal to possess or to drink alcohol, to be in drinking establishments, or to be in a group of minors who are in the possession of alcohol even if you are not drinking.
4. Shopping: Stealing something from a store is a very serious violation of the law in the United States.
5. Hitch Hiking: Hitch hiking is not allowed. In the USA it can be very dangerous to take a ride from an unknown person.

*Any infraction of the above rules may result in immediate dismissal from the program and termination of the F-1 Visa.*

6. Computer/internet Usage: Not all host families have computer/internet access at their home. If you are placed in a home with computer/internet access, students should limit the amount of non-academic computer/internet use each day. This is true even if you have brought your own personal computer.
7. Smoking: It is illegal to buy tobacco products if you are under the age of 18. Students are not allowed to smoke.
8. Behavior: Students must always be aware of their responsibility as exchange students and make a determined effort to represent their country in a positive manner.
9. Seatbelts: Everyone in a car is required to wear seatbelts. Failure to wear seatbelts can cause serious injury in the event of an accident.
10. School: Students must follow school rules, attend school daily, complete all school assignments and must pass all classes. If a student is failing any class then the student may need to hire a private tutor at the student's expense. Any student that is expelled or suspended from school for breaking school rules may be terminated from the school. Excessive tardiness, skipping classes, poor grades and/or poor behavior at school can lead to school disciplinary action even termination from school and the F-1 visa program. HCS is a religious school and exchange students will be required to attend classes on religion and chapel services.
11. Restricted Activities: Students are not permitted to participate in sky-diving, hang-gliding, bungee-jumping, parachute diving, paint ball or other dangerous activities. Students are not permitted to visit such places as a pornographic shops, adult theaters, or drinking establishments.
12. Phone Use: Students must show respect for their host families and act as an active member of the family by following family rules, voluntarily helping with family chores and engaging

with all members of the family. Students should not discuss their host family's private affairs with others.

13. Placement: Students cannot change host families or schools at will. If you are unhappy with your placement you need to talk to the HCS contact person,
14. Travel: Students are not permitted to go on trips without written permission from their natural parents, HCS and their host family. It is the student's responsibility to complete and turn in all travel requests to the HCS contact person. Please see the Travel section for more information.
15. Life Changing Decisions: Students may not make any "life changing" decisions or actions while on the program. This includes, but is not limited to changing religions, marriage, tattooing, and body piercing.

## **What These Rules Mean to YOU**

Rules #1-5 are very important. A student who does not adhere to these rules may be released from the program, be sent back to their home country, and have their visa revoked. A failure to abide by rules #6-15 will mean that the student may be placed on probationary status in order to correct his/her behavior. If the student does not show immediate and continual improvement, the student may be dismissed from the program. *Students will not be placed on probation for the same offense twice! You only get one opportunity to correct your behavior.*

A student in the program who is arrested for violation of any USA federal or state laws will be sent home immediately. This can also affect your status with immigration officials and have a negative effect on you ability to visit the country in the future.

## **Host Family Rules for Students**

Every host family will have unique household rules and expectations. Each host family is asked to write down their rules, expectations, and basic family operations in order to give the student a clear idea of how the family functions and what the consequences are if the rules are not followed. If your host family does not give/discuss their expectations with you, please ask them what they are and be very certain that you understand them. Ask questions if something is not clear.

Here is a *sample* set of expectations for a typical American family:

1. Learn our name, address and phone number immediately.
2. We all live here together. You are part of our family. We will treat you the same way that we treat our own children.
3. We are your parents for the time you are here. Please treat us the way you want to be treated.
4. We are not your servants. We must all do our share to keep the house looking nice. We must take care of ourselves and our possessions. We must help others as needed.
5. We must all use good manners in our home. "Please," "Thank you," "I'm sorry," "May I help you?" and good manners during meals and around each other are a must.
6. If you have a concern, a question, or you feel lonely, sad, or happy, please talk to any of us. We are your family for the next year and we want to be part of your life and share the happy as well as the sad.

Here is a *sample* of everyday household rules for a typical American family:

1. Keep your room and bathroom clean.

2. Make your bed and pick up your things each day.
3. Clean your bathroom once a week.
4. Change your sheets regularly.
5. Do not leave food or garbage in your bedroom (most families do not allow food in their bedrooms).
6. Make your own breakfast and lunch on school days. When you are finished, clean up your mess. This means putting the food away, washing the dishes, cleaning the counters and cleaning up any other spills.
7. Whenever you cook or do a project, clean up after yourself.
8. Everyone takes turns doing chores. Please check to see what your chores are and do them without having to be reminded.
9. To conserve energy, please turn off lights, radios, etc. when they are not in use.
10. You may be responsible for your own laundry.

## **General Responsibilities for Students**

Students do have responsibilities when joining a homestay program. It is important that you realize this before you leave your home country and that you be willing to accept these responsibilities once you arrive in your host country. The following areas need to be considered:

### **Responsibility to Your Home Country**

You are an ambassador of your home country. You may be the only person from your country that your host family, their friends, and your school staff and classmates, and the people of your community have ever met. It is important that you be an excellent representative of your country. Your actions and manners need to bring favorable reactions from those you encounter during your stay.

### **Responsibility to Your Host Family**

Your host family is showing kindness and courage by inviting you to live with them for an extended period of time. Just as you are brave for coming into a totally new and different situation, they are brave for their willingness to host a teenager with a different background, culture, and different customs. This may be the first time they have lived with a teenager.

*It is your responsibility to fit into the lifestyle of your host family.* Do not expect them to change their ways of doing things to be more like what you have at home. If there are changes to be made, you are the one who needs to make them. Families host mainly for a learning experience. It is important for you to come prepared to share your country and culture with your host family and friends. Please bring pictures, examples of arts/crafts from your home country, recipes or your favorite dish, or music that is popular with teens from your country.

### **Responsibility to Your School**

Students are required to maintain passing grades in their classes. Host families are encouraged to provide support in this area and to report immediately to the HCS contact person if the student is experiencing difficulty maintaining acceptable grades.

It is very important that you spend your time during your homestay joining in activities in your host school and community. There is a real temptation to find other students from your home country and do

everything with them. When you do this, the normal inclination is to speak in your native language. This excludes everyone else and soon other students will give up trying to make friends with you.

Students usually state that one reason for coming on a homestay is to improve their English. The best way to improve your English is to practice it. No one will fault you if you make a mistake in English; rather they will think you're very brave to be able to do as well as you do.



# **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

## **Conflict Resolution**

In this program, we are bringing together two very different participants: an American host family and the foreign high school student. Our hope is that you will spend the months of the program together and feel a great deal of success at the conclusion of the program. Occasionally the experience between the host family and the student does not work; regardless of whether it is obvious, subtle, or just not the right fit. After reviewing the problem with all parties involved, the school may feel that they would both benefit by the student being moved to another family. This does not mean that anyone was at fault. It simply means that the combination of people and personalities did not work. This rarely happens.

## **Important Rules for Host Families and Students**

- Good communication between the student and host families is critical.
- Get all the facts and information before forming opinions. Things are not always as they seem.
- Inform your HCS contact person of the problem and utilize their skills in gathering information and mediating the problem between all parties.
- Try to resolve problems. Students are usually only moved when there is no other solution.

## **Conflict Procedure**

1. If a student or host family is experiencing a problem, efforts will be made to get the facts and resolve it. Every attempt possible will be made to mediate and resolve whatever conflicts have occurred. A student will be clearly advised as to whatever behavior changes may be necessary to continue successfully their homestay experience.
2. If the family or student has a legitimate problem that cannot be solved, efforts will be made to find a new family for the student.
3. If the student has a behavior problem, but is willing to make changes, the student maybe placed on probation. In this situation, the student will be placed on a 30 day probation period and the student's parents will be informed that there is a chance the student may be sent home. If the behavior does not improve in 30 days, then the student may be sent home. Students are not placed on probation twice for the same behavior. If the student's behavior improves for a short time after the probationary period, but then has a relapse, most likely the student will be sent home.
4. When it is agreed that the student will be sent home, the HCS contact person will inform the student of this decision.
5. The host family should not contact the natural family abroad to discuss the situation with them. The HCS administration or contact person may do this after discussing the situation with all parties involved.
6. The above procedures are set up to deal with extreme circumstances. It is our intention always to guide participants in our program through whatever difficulties may occur.

# TRAVEL

## **Travel**

This is not a travel program. The purpose is to excel in relationships with your host family and school. Travel will only be permitted when it has been determined to enhance the educational and cultural experience of the students. HCS has the right to refuse any travel request and any student who travels without the permission of HCS will face automatic termination from the program.

Going out of town with your host family on a weekend or during a vacation is not considered travel. Your host family does need to take their Power of Attorney for you with them when you go out of town. For these purposes, travel is defined as the student traveling to a destination without their host family. Travel plans need to be coordinated around the school schedule. Travel plans that include missing days of school may not be approved.

All travel requests should be submitted to the HCS contact person 2 weeks prior to the departure date. Students should speak with their host family about their travel plans to make sure they do not interfere with any family plans.

# INSURANCE

## **Insurance**

All students must have a medical health insurance and liability policy. This policy will cover any non pre-existing medical conditions and accidents that arise during their stay. Dental work is covered on an emergency basis only. Pre-existing conditions, optical care, immunizations, prescriptions, and high risk adventure activities are generally not covered by insurance.

All students must come with an insurance card and have copies that they immediately give to their host family and HCS. The student should carry the insurance card at all times. The student needs to bring a copy of the insurance policy and give it to the host family.

# **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

## **Emergency Procedures for Host Families**

### **Accident or Illness**

- Provide initial care for the student and seek medical attention if needed. You must bring the student's insurance card and the Power of Attorney and present them to the hospital or physician to obtain treatment.
- Contact your HCS contact person as soon as possible if the problem is serious.
- Proceed with the doctor's advice for emergency treatment.
- HCS will contact and relay advice from the parents abroad.
- Complete insurance procedures as explained in their insurance policy manual.

### **Lost Student**

- Contact the police if necessary.
- Contact the HCS contact person or the main HCS office.

### **Smoking, Prinking & Breaking the Law**

- HCS prohibits smoking and the use or possession of drugs and alcohol. Host families are reminded not to serve students alcoholic beverages.
- If the student is discovered partaking in a severe infraction of the law the host family should contact the HCS' contact person or the HCS main office immediately.

### **Abuse**

- If you witness or hear about the abuse of a student, please contact the HCS contact person or office immediately.

# **PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE**

## **Preparing for Departure**

All Students are expected to depart for their native country within one week after their last day of school. HCS is not responsible for any student after the end of the program. The host family's responsibilities are completed at the end of the program or one week after school is out.

### **Planning for Your Departure**

Each student makes different arrangements for departure. It is not the responsibility of HCS to arrange the student's return flight. Please check with your travel agent before you leave for your native home about how final reservations should be made. In many cases, the student is responsible for making the reservations. Do not procrastinate. Airline flights book up fast for the summer months. All students should book their flights to depart within one week of the last day of school. Host families are only asked to host the student for one week after school ends.

As your departure approaches, you should call your designated airline and check about the size and weight of luggage allowed without excess baggage charges. Some airlines are very strict about this. You need to make the decision to either ship the majority of your belongings or pay the excess baggage fee. *Do not leave your extra luggage behind for your host family to send.* It is your responsibility to plan ahead.

### **Payment of Final Bills**

Before departure, you must talk to your host family about any remaining unpaid bills. Consider any telephone bills accumulated during the final weeks of your stay. Are there any outstanding school fees, dental bills, or medical bills? You must settle all your debts before departure.

### **Separating from your Host Family**

As the time grows close for you to leave your host family, do not hesitate to talk about your departure or your concerns about departure. Some people have trouble saying "good-bye" to their host family. Some students have expressed concerns about returning home, such as speaking your own language, reuniting with your friends, etc. The best way to deal with these concerns or fears is to identify them and talk about them.

*Please write your host family a thank you note or letter on your return to your home country. Your host family will be concerned about you and they are also going through the separation process.*

**VISA**

## **Visa**

### **The F-1 Visa**

Students are advised of the Department of Homeland Security regulation which requires that all initial or beginning students enter the USA 30 days or less in advance of the course of study start/report date as shown on the Form 1-20. Please consider this date carefully when making travel plans to the USA. HCS host families are prepared for you to arrive approximately one week before the first day of school. Arriving approximately one week before school begins will give your body time to adjust before beginning school. Don't forget that you are to stay with your host family for only one week after the school year ends. Please make tentative plans for your departure date with your family before you come to the USA. This date should be within one week of the end of the school year.

### **Staying Beyond Your Authorized Stay and Being Out of Status**

- You should carefully consider the dates of your authorized stay and make sure you are following the procedures under USA immigration laws. It is important that you depart the USA on or before the last day you are authorized to be in the USA on any given trip, based on the specified end date on your Arrival-Departure Record, Form 1-94. Failure to depart the USA will cause you to be out-of-status. Additional information on successfully maintaining your immigration status while an exchange student can be found on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website.
- Staying beyond the period of time authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and being out-of-status in the United States, is a violation of USA immigration laws, and may cause you to be ineligible for a visa in the future if you would want to travel again to the USA.
- Staying unlawfully in the United States beyond the date Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have authorized—even by one day—results in your visa being automatically voided, in accordance with INS 222(g). Under this provision of immigration law, if you overstay on your nonimmigrant authorized stay in the USA, your visa will be automatically voided. In this situation, you are required to reapply for a new visa nonimmigrant visa, generally in your country of nationality.
- For non-immigrants in the USA who have an Arrival-Departure Record, Form I- 94 with the CBP admitting officer endorsement of Durations of Status or D/S, but who are no longer performing the same function in the USA that they were originally admitted to perform (e.g. you are no longer attending school or the same school), a DHS or an immigration judge will make a finding of status violation, resulting in the termination of the period of authorized stay.

### **What to do if You Want to Return to HCS the Following School Year**

By May 1st the student needs to get permission from the HCS contact person to return the following school year. The HCS contact person will extend the 1-20 program dates and print a new 1-20 that will be sent home with the student at the end of the school year.