



International Student Host Family Handbook

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Because the host family acts on behalf of the student's natural parents, the host family is an essential participant in the academic life of the international student while attending Furtah Preparatory School.

To ensure that the student and host family experience is a positive one, FPS has an International Student Teacher Advocate (ITA) onsite, as well as access to an International Student Parent Advocate (IPA) who work in conjunction with the International Student Coordinator. The Coordinator and Advocates will work with the host families and students throughout the year.

ASSIGNMENT AS A HOST FAMILY

Host parents and anyone residing in the home who is over 18 must have a background check (State, National, and DMV). The background check will be arranged by the FPS Finance Manager.

FPS will provide each International Student with contact information for their host family. Students and host families can begin communicating over the summer.

Get to know your student's home country. The more you can learn about your student's culture, the better you will be able to understand and appreciate your cultural differences. This knowledge will prevent some potential misunderstandings between you and your student and will help you to get started in a positive manner. Keep in mind, adjustments are a natural part of the process while you and your student are getting to know each other.

GUARDIANSHIP

International students enrolled at FPS are officially under its guardianship while school is actually in session (*in parentis loci*). In turn, FPS assigns students to a host family. The host family agrees to provide a safe, supportive home life for the student and serves as the guardian for the student while in the home. The host parents are considered the student's parents while in the United States. FPS has the authority to approve, deny, and/or require a student's participation in any activity should the school deem it necessary.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Host families will meet their student at the airport and bring them to their new home in the States. Students will return home after the end-of-year ceremonies in June.

ORIENTATION

All host families are expected to attend an orientation directed by the FPS International Student Parent Advocate and the International Student Teacher Advocate. This orientation will be held shortly before the start of school.

All new international students are expected to attend International Student Orientation, which may be held one week after classes begin. If your International Student is new to FPS, it is imperative for the student to attend this orientation.

BUILDING A FAMILY ATMOSPHERE

The Host Family welcomes the student as a new member of the family, not as someone who rents a room in the house. The Host Family shall treat the Student like his/her own child. Students are expected to integrate into the family life of the home. This includes respecting house rules, eating with the family, participating in family activities and completing chores as appropriate. In general, you have the same authority over your student that you would have over your own children. Be prepared to provide patience, understanding, affection and guidance for your student. You should hold your student accountable and give consequences for making poor choices - just as you would do with your own child.

HOUSE RULES AND COMMUNICATION

Fostering good communication and addressing any issues that arise in a timely manner is essential for all parties involved. Both the student and his/her host family are expected to make a genuine effort to communicate and nurture a mutual understanding and friendship.

Remember, your student didn't grow up in your home. To relieve potential stress and misunderstanding, it will be helpful for your student to know what to expect from members of your family. Explain your rules simply and explain why they are important to you. **For example:** *"We need to know where you are going, with whom you are going, and when you will be home. The reason for this is that we are responsible for you. We want you to be safe and this is something we require of all our family members. This saves us from worry and is a courtesy that our family insists on."*

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

All students must have their own bed, but they can share a room with a host sibling of the same gender and within four years of their age. If another international student will be staying at the same home, ***each student and their families must agree to the international students residing together.*** All students should be provided with linens, a closet or bureau, a place to study, and access to a bathroom with a shower/bath. Towels for their own use should be provided as well. Students provide all their basic toiletries, such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, hair and eye care products, deodorant, etc. Students are responsible for bringing their own computer or laptop.

MEALS AND EATING ARRANGEMENTS

The Host family is expected to provide a nutritious breakfast and dinner during weekdays when school is in session and all three meals a day during the weekend. If the Host Parent is absent during meal times (or school vacations/holidays), a meal should be prepared in advance or leave instructions and funds for delivery of a meal. Host families should feel comfortable talking directly to their student about foods the student prefers to eat and foods their student does not like. Specific dietary needs, if any, should be noted on the **Guardian-Medical Release Form** completed by the natural parents. **FPS will provide the host family with a copy of this form.**

Learning about food is an important part of understanding a new culture. Students are encouraged to embrace the cultural experience of the family meals as prepared by the host families as part of their learning experience. Often times, the International Students will have an opportunity to teach their host families about food from their own countries as well.

RELIGION

You should respect your student's religious beliefs, and he/she should respect yours. Host families may invite students to attend worship services as part of the cultural experience, but students are not required to participate.

CURFEW

As part of their house rules, families will set a curfew that students must respect. The host family may establish a "lights-out" policy and/or time for quiet hours. It is the student's job to adjust to the American way of life. Be sure to take the time to explain to your student the reason behind your "rules".

CELL PHONES and COMPUTERS

Students are responsible for establishing their personal cell phone plan. Host families are asked to assist students in selecting their cell phone plan and setting up an account with the provider of their choice.

Students are responsible for bringing their own computer or laptop AND obeying house rules regarding devices.

Your student should take financial responsibility for calls to his or her home country. If your student must use the phone to contact home, he or she should call collect or use a pre-paid calling card. Do not forget Skype is free.

HOMESICKNESS/CULTURE SHOCK

Studying in a foreign country is exciting, but it can be overwhelming at times - especially at the beginning of the school year. Speaking with family back home can sometimes help. However, the student should be encouraged to connect with new friends and family as this is one of the best ways to overcome culture shock.

Students and host families should feel comfortable speaking with the FPS International Student Teacher Advocate (ITA) and/or the FPS International Student Parent Advocate (IPA) to help them work through the symptoms of culture shock. If problems arise for any reason, please address them early on and seek assistance from either the ITA and/or the IPA whenever needed.

Should a change in housing assignment become necessary, everyone involved should try to help the change take place easily and naturally. Changes to housing assignments are not permitted unless a formal request has been reviewed and approved by the School. FPS implements a three-week waiting period at the beginning of the school year before considering requests for housing changes. Many times, students who are uncomfortable with their housing assignment are experiencing culture shock and simply need time to adjust. In rare cases when a change is deemed appropriate, the School will work to identify a new host family and facilitate the move.

SCHOOL MATTERS:

(Immunizations, Dress Code, Attendance, Academics, Etc.)

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH CERTIFICATES (GA Forms 3231 and 3300)

It is the host family's responsibility to ensure Furtah Preparatory School is provided with their international student's current **Georgia Certificate of Immunization (Form #3231)** and **Form #3300 (Certificate of Eye, Ear, Dental, and Nutritional Screening)**.

All international students must obtain and provide the school with a copy of the immunization certificate marked "**Complete for School**" as well as a copy of the Certificate of Eye, Ear, Dental, and Nutritional Screening (**#3300**). Forms may be completed and obtained at the local public health departments or any licensed physician offices. The Health Department will transfer the immunization information from the International Student's immunization forms from his/her own country.

If necessary, a 30 calendar day waiver may be requested through the Health Dept. or a licensed physician's office. The waiver will permit the student to be provisionally enrolled in FPS for 30 calendar days from the date the waiver is granted for a justified reason. Upon expiration of the waiver, the student shall not be permitted to attend the school unless the student submits a Certificate of Immunization and/or Certificate of Eye, Ear, Dental, and Nutritional Screening. It is the responsibility of the host parent to provide the school with the required form(s) within the 30 day period.

If an international student qualifies for a waiver based on "conflict of religious beliefs", the **natural parent** must sign the **FPS waiver** and arrange for the form to be officially notarized. The form should then be faxed to the FPS office.

FPS DRESS CODE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

International students are required to follow the FPS Dress Code and Code of Conduct. Both "Codes" are described in the FPS Student Handbook. As part of school policy, the student and the host parent must read the FPS Student Handbook and sign/submit the Signature Page indicating they have read and understand all FPS policies and rules.

Please remember, the handbook is subject to change - especially at the beginning of the school year. If and when changes are made, all parents and guardians will be notified

Decisions and discipline regarding academic distress or violations of the Code of Conduct are in the domain of the International Student Coordinator, Teacher Advocate, Director of Academics and Student Success, and finally, the Headmaster.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES and SCHOOL EVENTS

The Host steps into role of guardian on behalf of the Student's parents for all school matters, including, but not limited to attending parent-teacher conferences or attending a school event where the Student is featured. (All natural parents must sign a **Guardianship - Medical Release Form** for their student who will be attending Furtah Preparatory School. This form will be notarized and submitted to the school. The school will keep the original and the host family will receive the original form.)

GRADES/TRANSCRIPTS

Students must maintain a minimum of a C average (74%) in every class. If a student falls below a C average due to lack of trying, FPS reserves the right to send the student back home.

Transcript requests should be made through the FPS website in order to be sent to the Registrar for fulfillment. When needing to send transcripts to colleges, the student should leave plenty of time for the transcript to be fulfilled and sent prior to the college's deadline.

FIELD TRIPS

There may be additional costs associated with field trips taken throughout the year. The International Student will be billed separately for the cost of any trip.

ATTENDANCE and SICK DAYS

Students are required to attend school and all scheduled classes daily and to be on time. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school (Office Manager) in writing of the date and reason for the absence within 5 school days of the absence. The parent/guardian must note the student's name, the date(s) of absence(s), and the reason for the absence. If a student is being checked-in or checked-out for a doctor's appointment, a physician's note or appointment card is required to be considered excused. Students with excessive absences due to illness or injury may be required to present a note from a doctor or the Health Department to be considered excused. If a student repeatedly misses school, or is repeatedly tardy, **course credit may be withheld after 5 unexcused absences within one semester.** Please see the FPS Student Handbook (available on the FPS website) for more detailed information regarding attendance and tardiness.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS

The host family is expected to host their student throughout the entire school year, including official school "breaks". Students are allowed to return home during the December break. However, International Students are required to communicate their plans in writing to the International Student Coordinator and host family prior to each vacation period. ***All travel outside the United States must be approved, and the I-20 form should be updated to ensure the ability to re-enter the United States.***

TRAVEL

While under the school's guardianship, International Students are not permitted to travel within the United States without school approval. All travel plans need to be communicated to the International Student Coordinator and host family in advance. **Traveling can be done only with the host family or the school.** In the case of unusual travel plans, FPS reserves the right to confirm these plans with the student's natural parents and secure permission in writing. Remember, **any travel experience must have prior written permission from FPS.**

DRIVING AND TRANSPORTATION

The Host Family is required to provide transportation to and from school and school functions. In terms of other necessary rides such as extra-curricular activities, the Student is required to pre-schedule with the Host Family. As in any family, the goal is to find a good balance between allowing the student to experience a full range of school activities with the family's availability to provide transportation.

Students may not rent, drive or own any motorized vehicle at any time or place while under the guardianship of the school. Students are not permitted to take Driver's Education classes. If a host family allows a student to drive a vehicle, in most states, the host family becomes liable in the event of an accident. **Anyone who allows a student to drive is wrongfully assuming a heavy responsibility and putting the student, as well as their own family, in a precarious position.**

No hitchhiking is allowed. It is illegal in many places and can be very dangerous.

MEDICAL CARE and/or EMERGENCIES

HEALTH INSURANCE

All international students are **required to purchase and provide proof of a health insurance plan prior to arrival.**

DOCTOR'S VISITS AND EMERGENCY TREATMENT

The ***Guardianship Form- Medical Release Authorization Form*** allows the host family to secure any necessary medical attention for the student, if necessary. Both the school and the host family have the legal right to sign all emergency medical release or authorization forms which may be required by medical care providers should the need arise. All guardianship and medical release forms should be on file with FPS and a copy will be provided to the host family. All *serious medical situations* must immediately be reported to the FPS coordinator and to the international agency through which the student has applied.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a medical emergency, the host family is to make sure their student is receiving proper medical treatment. In the case of any medical emergency, the Host Family (Parent) should accompany the Student to the hospital. In the case of any medical event or emergency, the Host Family is required to contact the FPS International Teacher Advocate and the Headmaster. If either cannot be reached, the Parent Advocate should be notified of the medical event.

The costs associated with Doctor's visits and other medical treatments are the responsibility of the student. **The host family is not responsible for paying the costs associated with medical or dental care.**

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

EMPLOYMENT

Students are not allowed to take a job during their stay in the United States. They may take small jobs (babysitting, yard work, etc.) that do NOT require a Social Security Number. This is a visa restriction. Even with small jobs, your student cannot work more than 10 hours per week.

SEEKING PARENTAL PERMISSION

You may find yourself uncomfortable with a decision to allow your student to participate in certain activities. There may be some activities which present issues in terms of RESPONSIBILITY, INSURANCE, AND LIABILITY. Be sure to notify the FPS International Student Teacher Advocate in the event additional information or help facilitating communication with the natural parent is needed. The natural parents may need to approve of the activity and sign liability responsibility paperwork authorizing and accepting responsibility for specific activities.

COMMUNICATION WITH NATURAL PARENTS

Communicating with your student's natural family can be enjoyable and helpful to all. Even though there may be a language barrier, your letters and/or emails will most likely be reassuring to them regarding their child's welfare. In most cases, your student's natural family will be able to get your letters and emails translated. Because mail service in many countries is unreliable, it is advisable to use email if both families have internet access. Try to make the natural family a part of their student's experience. Please do not ask for their counsel or cause them to worry unnecessarily.



NOMINATED GUARDIAN DECLARATION

I/we, _____,
residing at _____,
accept responsibility for the general welfare, accommodation and support of:
_____ while he/she remains in my/our home. I/We
understand that approval must be obtained from FPS if any changes to the accommodation arrangements
are required.

Please provide the following supporting documents:

- 1. Proof of age of guardian (e.g. passport/birth certificate/driver's license)
- 2. FPS will complete a background check and maintain the documentation.
- 3. Evidence of familial relationship (if guardian is related to student)

_____ Guardian Parent Signature	_____ Date
_____ Guardian Parent Signature	_____ Date

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree that I will not change my accommodation
arrangements without the prior consent of FPS.

_____ Student Signature	_____ Date
_____ FPS Headmaster Signature	_____ Date