

# STUDENT MANUAL

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## **Welcome!**

On behalf of the staff of STS Foundation we would like to welcome you as an international exchange student. We hope that your stay in the United States will be a rewarding and exciting experience.

During your stay in America on the STS Foundation Exchange Student Program, you will come to understand the American culture and gain a greater appreciation of your own culture. This booklet was designed to help you understand more about life in the United States. It will tell you what to expect and give you some useful information about living in America.

Please take the time to read this entire booklet. Write down any questions you may have. Be sure that you understand the information in this manual. All of us at STS Foundation hope that you will have an exciting and rewarding year while living in the States and we will do all we can to help make it a success!

### ***Who is STS Foundation?***

STS Foundation is a not-for-profit educational organization. The National Office located in Scottsdale, Arizona is responsible for the overall operations of the program. The STS Foundation National Office works directly with overseas exchange programs that are responsible for application processing and the screening of applicants.

### **NATIONAL OFFICE**

The National Office is open from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday, Mountain Time. If your call is answered by our voice mail, please leave a message, we will return your call as quickly as possible. If your call is an emergency and you call after hours, the message will give you another number to call. STSF has a 24-hour answering service which you will be immediately connected to when you call the National Office, toll-free, at 1-800-522-4678.

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Let us tell you how the STS Foundation program works. Long before you board your airplane to come to the United States, the staff of STS Foundation has been preparing for your arrival. STS Foundation Local Coordinators have been working on finding and screening potential host families. They have visited local high schools ensuring that you will be accepted and welcomed by the students and teachers. Your host family was visited by a Local Coordinator (LC) who helped them to select YOU -their new exchange student! Now it is just a matter of time before you start an exciting and rewarding year in the United States with your new family!

## **STS Foundation Student Support**

Once you have arrived in the United States, you will meet your STS Foundation *Local Coordinator (LC)* and *Regional Coordinator (RC)*. Your Local Coordinator lives in the area and works with you on a local level. Your Regional Coordinator, who may live in another state, oversees the work of the Local Coordinator and is there to assist you when your Local Coordinator is not able to. They will work closely with the STS Foundation National Office on all matters relating to your exchange experience.

### **LOCAL COORDINATOR**

Soon after arrival, your Local Coordinator will invite you and your new family to an orientation meeting where you will have the opportunity to meet the other STS Foundation exchange students in the area, and go over the STS Foundation rules. Your Local Coordinator will keep **monthly** contact with you, your host family and your school to ensure that you are getting the most out of your exchange year! You should feel comfortable with your Local Coordinator and consider him/her someone you can call and talk to about anything.

Your Local Coordinator is your first link in the STS Foundation support chain. He/she is there to help solve problems should they arise. You are encouraged to discuss problems and/or concerns with your Local Coordinator first.

### **REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

If your Local Coordinator is unable to help you, he/ she may suggest that you contact your regional coordinator. If you are having difficulties, often times the regional coordinator steps in to work with you, your host family and your Local Coordinator on problem solving. You are welcome to contact your regional coordinator at any time.

## **BEFORE I LEAVE MY HOME COUNTRY**

### **WHAT LEGAL DOCUMENTS DO I NEED?**

#### **Passport**

You will need a valid passport from your own country. This should be done as soon as possible. Make sure that your passport will be valid for the full length of your stay in the States.

**Visa And DS-2019** As an STS Foundation exchange student you will be coming into the United States on a J-1 student visa.

STS Foundation will send you a form called the DS-2019. This is also called the “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status.” It is one form with 2 pages. Be sure to fill in the information that is requested on the bottom of the front page and read both pages carefully. Then sign it.

**It may take time for the embassy or consulate to issue a visa, don't delay in taking your DS-2019 form and passport to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to apply for your visa.** The visa will be placed into your passport to give you permission to come to the United States as an exchange student for one academic school year.

- ❖ **IMPORTANT NOTE: Your DS-2019 form is as important as your passport and visa while you are in the United States. Do not lose it, and keep it safe with your other important documents throughout your exchange. The only person who may take it (outside of your host parents for safe keeping) is the Immigration Officer at your "Port of Entry" into the United States. If they keep it at that time, they will send it on to the STS Foundation National office, and we will forward it on to you at your host family's home. If you have questions regarding this please contact the National office at 1-800-522-4678.**

### **I-94 Form**

On the airplane you will receive an I-94 form issued by the United States Immigration Office, and a Customs Declaration Form. You must have these documents completely filled out when you land and go through US customs. Airline personnel are there to assist you should you have any questions regarding the completion of these documents.

Upon arrival at the American airport, the Immigration Officer will ask to see your passport, visa and DS-2019 Form. The Officer will stamp the DS-2019 and hand it back to you.

The Customs Official may ask you to show him/her the gifts you are bringing with you. Be sure that you do not have any fresh meat, plant products or other living things. It is unlawful bring such items into the United States.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- **It is important that you keep your DS-2019 Form in your passport at all times. If you lose this form, contact your Local Coordinator immediately or the National Office at 1-800-522-4678.**
- **If your host family plans on traveling outside the U.S. borders, for example to Mexico or Canada, you must send your DS-2019 into the National Office in order for it to be signed by a Responsible Officer before you travel. Please give yourself enough time before you travel when mailing your DS-2019 to be signed so that the documents can be mailed back to you in time.**

### **Other documents**

Make sure that you also have the following with you:

- STS Foundation Identification Card
- Insurance Claim Forms
- Insurance Identification Card
- Verification of recent vaccinations (if needed)

## **WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?**

### **Packing your luggage**

You will be living in the United States for almost one year. Take time to consider the things you will bring with you, keeping in mind that you will return with more than you have taken. Consider taking only one piece of luggage and purchasing another in the United States. When writing to your host family, ask them what they recommend you bring, and what kind of weather you can expect.

American high school students rarely wear suits or dressy clothing to school. These types of clothing might be worn to a special dance or school affair, to church, or for going out to a special restaurant. Teenagers prefer casual wear and often blue jeans are worn at school. Here are some suggestions for you:

1. Five or six changes of school clothing. For boys: casual slacks, shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts. For girls: slacks, skirts, blouses, sweaters. Jeans are a favorite for everyone.
2. One or two dressy outfits. For boys: a suit or sport jacket, a dress shirt and a tie. For girls: a nice dress or suit.
3. Outdoor/Sport clothing: sweat pants/shirts, pullover jackets with hoods.
4. Shoes: dress, casual, sport, boots (if needed)
5. Necessities: underwear, socks and other personal items.
6. Outerwear: jacket, coat, gloves, hat (depending on climate)

### **Non -Clothing Items**

- Shampoo, personal items
- Medication, supply of contact lenses, extra glasses
- Pictures of your family, friends, and country.
- Journal- a diary
- Gift for your host family
- Cookbook or recipes from home.
- Information about your country to share with family or school
- Bilingual dictionary

## **WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL TREATMENT BEFORE I GO TO THE STATES?**

### **Dental and Eye Treatment**

Medical treatment in the United States can be very expensive and you must have health insurance. You are provided with health insurance from your organization in your home country; however, eye and dental care are services that are not covered under your insurance policy. If you think that you need any dental care, get treatment before departing. If you think your glasses

need changing or you need new contact lenses, have these made before you depart. Bring an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses with you if you can.

### **Vaccinations**

If you did not have all of the required vaccinations at the time you filled out your application, be sure to get the required vaccinations before you leave for the United States. Bring along verification that you have had the vaccinations; you will need this to enroll in your American high school. In the unlikely event that you cannot obtain certification of these vaccinations in your country, you will have to receive the required vaccinations in the United States before you can enroll, and you will be required to pay for these vaccinations. Most schools in America now require 2 MMR vaccinations. Be aware that if you do not have these, your school will require you to be vaccinated prior to enrollment.

### **Insurance**

Before you arrive, you will have been provided with information about your insurance coverage while in the U.S. This coverage will allow you to access certain medical attention if needed. However, it does not guarantee that all bills will be paid. Make sure you and your family understand how the insurance program works, as U.S. health insurance differs from many countries. Talk about and prepare an emergency payment plan should something happen and you need to use the insurance.

Your local coordinator will review your insurance information with you and your host family during the orientation. The LC will remind both you and the host family that the host family should not pay at any time for their student's healthcare costs. **Under no circumstances should a host family be expected to pay and be reimbursed.**

Some activities you may wish to enjoy in the U.S. might be considered 'High Risk.' If you choose to take part in an activity that is of high risk, you will need to fill out the **High Risk Release Form** which is included in this manual. This release form requires the signatures of your natural parents and STS Foundation and does not guarantee that the requested activity will be approved.

## **ARRIVAL IN AMERICA**

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE AIRPORT?**

You will arrive at an "*international airport*" in the United States after a very long flight. There will be a representative at the airport to assist you and the other students. You may have to change terminals and take another plane before you get to your final destination, someone will help you get to your next gate so that you can board your plane. Even if you are tired, please remain alert and take care of your personal belongings. Never leave your things with someone in the airport, take everything with you.

If you lose the escort or airport representative, please go to the nearest airline counter, and ask someone at the desk to assist you. Let them know that you are an exchange student and that you have another plane to board. If you are on a connecting flight and have missed your plane, please



contact your host family or the STS Foundation National Office. This number will be on your ID card.

Once you arrive at the local airport where you will be welcomed by your new host family or Local Coordinator, be sure to greet them with a warm smile. It may be hard to talk with them when you are feeling very tired, but be sure to tell them about your long flight. This will help them understand how tired you are.

### The First Day

After traveling through so many time zones it may take a day or two for you to adjust to your new schedule. Jet lag is a common reaction for people who travel into a different time zone. The best thing you can do for yourself is to sleep. You may even wake up in the middle of the night because your body still thinks it's on the other side of the world. It is o.k. for you to feel tired; your host family understands this and will try to take it slow for the first few days. Depending on your level of energy, they may want to show you around the neighborhood or take you past the school.

### The First Week

Your host family will want to talk to you about their routines and house rules. They will show you where to find things and how the appliances work. You may not remember everything but try to be attentive, ask questions. If at first you feel uncomfortable or nervous in your new environment, be patient and discuss your feelings with your host family. Your host family will want to show you around their community and make you feel at home, let them know that you appreciate the time they have taken with you, be open with them. Share your thoughts and ideas with them, ASK QUESTIONS. You may want to know about their daily routine, including what time meals are held, how to make a long distance phone call, and what to do if you miss the school bus. Think of other questions you might have and write them down. Keep your bilingual dictionary with you during the first few days so that you can be sure to get your ideas across to your family. It will also help your American family understand that you may not know American expressions. Don't be embarrassed if you do not understand what the host family is saying; politely ask them to explain it to you.

### The First Month

Shortly after your arrival your STS Foundation Local Coordinator will hold an *orientation* for you and your host family. This is a very important meeting and is a good time to ask more detailed questions about your exchange year. Your STS Foundation Local Coordinator will contact you, your host family and school each month to make sure that you are adjusting to your host family, that you are doing well in school, and address any concerns you may be having. If you are having problems, your first contact should be your Local Coordinator. If he/she is unable to help you, they will refer you to the regional coordinator. A report of these monthly contacts is completed and sent to your home country.

By this time you have started school and are on your way to a great year. If you are having any difficulties with your school subjects, please be sure to address them with your host family or Local Coordinator, it may be possible to get your difficult classes changed.

## EXPECTATIONS

### **What should I expect?**

*Congratulations* you have made a very big decision. You will travel to another country and live with a new and different family, you will adapt to another way of life! This decision was most likely one of the biggest in your life so far. With this challenge you will have some expectations. Some of the expectations will be realistic and others unrealistic. Realistic expectations will make your visit to America a very enjoyable one. If you have too many unrealistic expectations you may be very disappointed. Let's consider some of these expectations.

#### **REALISTIC expectations**

living with a caring and loving family  
living in a modest home  
helping with the family chores  
asking friends politely for a ride  
eating regional foods  
being a member of the family

#### **UNREALISTIC expectations**

living with a wealthy movie star  
living in a mansion  
having a maid or butler  
having a chauffeur  
eating steak every night  
being at a hotel as a guest

Remember- You are an exchange student. You are the newest member of an already existing family. This will not be like television or the books you read. This is a real American family and you will become an important part of it. The best advice we can give you is:

**keep an open mind**

**have as few expectations as possible**

**be adaptable**

**challenge yourself to adapt to a culture that is not your own**

**consider the wonderful possibilities waiting for you**

**make the most of your year**

You will have more fun if you try to act like an American instead of wishing American life was like your life back home. It is very important that you share yourself with your host family; take part in family activities, sit and spend the evening with your family members. Remember, their home is now your home.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

Remember why you wanted to come on this program. How many years did you consider this challenge? How long have you waited for this experience? Remember back to how you felt when you realized that your dream was going to come true, you were going to America as an Ambassador for your country. You were going to be a part of an American high school exchange program.

### **What's expected of me?**

Shortly after your arrival your LC will organize an Orientation for you and your host family. This may be organized as a group event or activity, but the LC leads each host family and their

student through a personalized orientation.

## **Orientation Topics for Student & Host Family**

Your LC will review the following topics:

- 1. Rules and Regulations**
  - STSF Program Rules and important STSF forms you will need for the year.
  - U.S. Department of State Regulations
  - Host Family House Rules
- 2. Compliance and Disciplinary Action**
  - STSF takes its rules seriously and breaking these rules can lead to an early return (Most students sent home were in violation of minimum grades, driving, breaking curfew, isolating themselves from host family and/or excessive contact with home, smoking, or alcohol/drug use, and not informing their host family of where they are).
- 3. Host Family Obligation and Relationships**
  - Your host family has been screened and selected to ensure you are provided a bed, three quality meals a day, reasonable transportation, and a caring supportive environment.
  - Your host family is doing this out of an honest interest in your culture and the experience that comes with the exchange program. They are volunteers, and have not been paid to host.
- 4. Financial Responsibilities**
  - Students are responsible for all personal expenses (e.g., personal hygiene items, school-related expenses, long distance calls, Skype, clothing, postage, entertainment, optional trips and medical expenses not covered by insurance.)
  - Students traveling with their host families should expect to pay their own way. A host family who invites or plans a family trip with the student, should be very clear (from the earliest planning stages of the trip) the cost of the trip.
  - Host families are not expected to take their students on trips, they are optional. If it is decided that a student will not travel with their host family, then a temporary host family needs to be accepted and a Temporary Host Family Application filled out.
- 5. Medical Insurance and Emergencies**
  - Students are responsible for paying for all medical services and submitting completed claim forms to the Insurance Company.
  - Dental coverage is limited to emergencies only.
  - STSF National Office emergency contact is 1-800-522-4678 any time of the day. If it is after business hours, the 24 hour answering service will forward the message on to the staff member on call.
- 6. School Expectations**
  - This is a J1 Visa academic program and that regular school attendance is required to maintain a J1 Visa status.
  - Students are to maintain a “C” or above in every class.
  - Students should not expect the following: to graduate, take driver’s education, participate in sports, receive a university scholarship, or receive a High School Diploma.
  - Each student must follow his/her school requirements regarding course work. Students are required to take the following: English, US History or Civics class.
- 7. Activities**
  - Overview of opportunities that schools and communities have available

## 8. Travel Policy

- No student is permitted to travel outside the local area either by themselves or with other teenagers. The local area will be defined by your LC. Overnight Traveling is allowed only with an approved group such as a school or church sponsored group, or with an adult person approved by the Host Family. With prior written permission, a student can fly alone to visit a relative or family known by the natural parents or the Host Family. A STSF TRAVEL RELEASE FORM must be completed and approved 2 weeks in advance for all overnight travel outside of the local area and on file with the national office before any travel can take place.
- The student's school must approve trips involving absence from school in advance.
- Travel also must be with an approved group or to visit persons known both to the student and natural parents. *The LC and RC must be informed of any travel plans prior to departure.*
- Every student will receive information about optional travel opportunities from their LC.
- **NOTE: TRAVEL ACROSS U.S. BORDERS** – Students *must* get their DS-2019 form mailed in and signed by the Alternate Responsible Officer at the National Office prior to travel across any U.S. borders. All documents will be mailed back to the student via Priority Mail unless the student provides a pre-paid return envelope of their chosen courier. Students need to send in their documents in a timely manner to ensure they are returned prior to departure.

## 9. Who to Contact for Help

- Students and Host Families should first go to their LC if there is a problem or conflict; the National Office is always available if it is an emergency and you cannot reach the LC or RC.

## 10. Adjustment Cycle

- Remind the student that everyone reacts differently to homesickness and culture shock.

## 11. Social Networking

As Social Networking becomes more and more common, here are some guidelines on how to use it as an exchange student.

- Students will be held responsible for everything posted and linked to their profile on social media and networking sites.
- Students must refrain from posting any content or images that indicate a violation of local, state, or federal laws, and STSF rules.
- Students must refrain from posting any content or images that are perceived as obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, and hateful or hurtful to the reputation of another person.
- Students must refrain from any online activity that could compromise their safety or the safety and privacy of their host family. This includes communicating or meeting with strangers, posting any information that could be used to identify their or their host family's identity or location such as full names, address, phone number, bank and credit card information, etc.
- Any of the above actions may result in disciplinary procedures such as warning or probation, and may lead to dismissal from the STSF program.

You, your host family, and the LC will all sign a document verifying that you have reviewed all of these topics listed above and that you agree to abide by these rules and instructions for the remainder of time with the program. This agreement will be kept on file at the STSF National Office.

## **ADJUSTING IN AMERICA**

### **CULTURE SHOCK -NOT ME!**

The dictionary defines culture shock as “a condition of anxiety and disorientation that can affect someone suddenly exposed to a new culture.” Culture shock is a natural response, and it can sneak up on you at any time. Culture shock is not an immediate ailment. It often develops after the initial excitement of being in the United States wears off. It will take time for you to adjust to America and your home.

If culture shock does occur, remember you can overcome it. You may think the problems you are experiencing could be solved by moving to a new host family, this is a common thought. Give yourself time. It is unlikely that you will even be aware culture shock is occurring. You may just feel tired and are sleeping a lot, or find that you often want to spend time alone in your room. You may feel irritated and angry, you find yourself criticizing America and all of its “stupid” ways. You compare everything to your country and your friends back home. These are all common symptoms of culture shock.

### **ME GET HOMESICK? NEVER!**

Homesickness is often associated with culture shock. Some students suffer from homesickness while others take to American life with ease. We are unable to predict which students will suffer from homesickness, and which will not. In order to combat these feelings you should try to become involved and stay active. Join a sport team or club at school, spend time with your host family doing the things they enjoy doing, work together in the yard, take the dog for a walk together with your host brother or sister, prepare a meal together, etc. This will also help you build a bond with your family.

Constant contact with your natural family can affect your adjustment to American culture and increase your feelings of homesickness. STS Foundation discourages excessive phone calls between natural families and students. Phone calls from home usually make you feel worse, not better. These calls from your parents or friends can actually prolong homesickness and culture shock. You should try to limit your calls home to once or twice a month. Writing letters, sending post cards, and e-mail are great inexpensive ways to keep your family informed of your activities.

### **WHAT IF MY NATURAL PARENTS WANT TO VISIT?**

A visit from your natural parents could interrupt the relationship you have with your host family. Your natural family should NOT visit you in the U.S. until the conclusion of your school year. If your parents do decide to visit you at the end of the year, they should make their own hotel arrangements. You cannot expect your host parents to “make room” for your parents. Not all families have homes large enough to accommodate guests. Be sure to include your host family in any plans you may make with your parents. Your host parents will be very anxious to meet your natural parents and make them a part of their family as well.

## WHAT IF I HAVE LANGUAGE PROBLEMS?

Communication is the key to learning and understanding. If you are having problems in communicating with your host family and friends, ask them to please speak slowly. If you ask politely, they will be glad to help you with your English, and even explain new words and phrases to you. There may be times when you will continuously ask questions and still not understand the answer; do not let this upset you. You must ask questions in order to have a better understanding of the English language.

You may first encounter language difficulties in school. Speaking English with your family and friends is easy, but suddenly you are in a classroom with a teacher who may not understand that you cannot follow along. Don't panic, talk to your teachers after class and let them know that you are having difficulties following the course.

Keep in mind these helpful tips:

- Be sure to schedule extra time when planning your study sessions.
- Try to write down words that are being spoken, but that you do not understand.
- When you study for your exams use a dictionary to help you understand words you do not recognize.
- Ask your host family for help when studying for an exam or with homework.
- Do not be afraid to ask teachers, family or friends for help.
- Spend time speaking with Americans, limit your time spent with other exchange students who speak your language.
- Keep your circle of friends diverse, you will pick up diverse language skills.
- Try to speak English all day, every day, by the end of the year you will be an expert!

## LIFE WITH MY HOST FAMILY

You have been given one of the most wonderful opportunities. Your host family has agreed to share their life and home with you for a year! You are not traveling to American on a holiday, you are going to live with an American family, go to an American high school and live life as an American for the next year! This will be one of the most challenging and rewarding years of your life!

It would be very nice of you to bring a very small gift for your host family, it is not required, but is a kind gesture. You should give them something you feel is unique to your country.

### The Gift of Sharing

*The most important thing that you can bring to share with your host family is yourself.*

Cultural exchange is very rewarding for both student and host family. For your host family the gift of sharing is one of the most important gifts you could ever give them. Here are some ways that you could share yourself with your host family:

Share your **time** with them. After school spend time at home sharing your day with your family. On the weekends go with them shopping, walking the dog, or doing whatever it is they do on the weekends. Also, plan on spending the holidays with your host family as it is a special time.

Share your **country**, **customs** and **traditions**. Talk about your life back home, show them photos, talk about your own family members, and share some funny stories you may have. Cook your favorite traditional meal, they probably have never had this food before and will be pleasantly surprised.

Share your **feelings**. It is important that you communicate with your host family. They want you to feel as though you are a part of the family.

Think creatively about what you might like to share about your country with your new American family and friends. Your goal in coming to the States may be to learn as much as you can about the American lifestyle; but, your host parents' goals will be to learn as much as they can from you. This means that you should share everything about yourself with them and they will do the same for you.

### Getting Along With Your Family

Your American host family has made the decision to open up their home to you. They are not paid to host; they have decided to do this for the experience of promoting culture exchange. It requires some effort from both you and your host family to make the exchange experience a success. Getting along with people is sometimes not easy, the key thing to remember is-- *Communication and Respect*.

Your host family will have house rules and you can start off on the right foot by letting them know that you respect their home and rules.

*Chores:* Most American teenagers have household chores or responsibilities. These are small tasks that help the family with the upkeep of their home. These tasks can range from taking out the garbage, to doing the dishes, to vacuuming, to mowing the lawn. It is always a good idea to offer to do chores, before you have to be asked.

*Telephone calls & Computer time:* Respect the family's wishes regarding the use of their telephone and computer. Here are some helpful hints regarding "phone etiquette."

Remember, the telephone and computer is for everyone in the family, so please limit your time when using them. Teenagers have a tendency to stay on the phone for hours at a time and this could annoy parents if they are waiting to use the phone. To avoid excessive contact with home you may want to have a designated "phone home" time.

Americans usually answer the phone by saying "Hello." This may be a bit different for those of you who are used to giving your name when answering the phone. Answering the phone should be friendly and informal, just saying "hello" is good!

Call Collect when you call your natural parents, or call them and have them call you right back. Do NOT expect your host family to pay for your phone calls. They are your responsibility. If you owe your host family money for your phone calls, you should pay them right away. You may

want to consider purchasing a long distance phone card as an alternative to calling collect. Your host family can help you purchase one if you ask them. Skype is also a good option if your host family is open to having the program on their computer.

Be sure to advise your friends and family back home to call at an appropriate hour. There will be a considerable time difference and they must be aware of this before calling you.

*Common courtesy* is mutual respect shown through a thoughtful act. It is treating other people as you would like to be treated. Some examples of common courtesy would be:

- Asking if you can help out with household chores such as raking the leaves in the fall, shoveling the snow in the winter, or mowing the lawn in the spring.
- Asking if anyone needs anything at the store since you are going to the store anyway.
- Offering to read a story to your younger siblings because your host parents are too busy.

A thoughtful act is one of the best ways to show that you care about someone and that you are a nice person. Everyone in every family must show common courtesy for the house to function as a home.

***Please and Thank You (Thanks):*** Americans are always saying, “Would you please...” or “Thanks for...” We have found that a number of exchange students are not used to saying Please and Thank You as often as Americans. So what happens? Americans get their feelings hurt and think that the exchange student is being impolite. You and your natural family know that you are not impolite; it is just not your custom to say these words.

“*What do I do?*”

Listen to Americans when they say Please and Thank You and see if you can add these words to your daily vocabulary. When you need a ride home, say, “Please may I have a ride home?” and say, “Thank you for picking me up at school.” It will show your host family and friends that you are trying to adjust to American customs and you will feel better about being polite!

***Family Activities:*** Belonging to a family means participating in family activities and your participation will be greatly appreciated by your Host Family. All of these experiences are part of what being an exchange student is all about. If your Host Family invites you to do something with them and you always refuse thinking that it won’t be fun, or that you would rather spend the time with your friends, then you are missing out on a very big part of your exchange experience. Even if you think that it will not be fun or interesting, try it. Go with your family, try the experience once, and if you find that it truly is not something that you like doing then politely say “no thank you” next time they ask. Make the most of your year; try all new experiences at least once!

***Dating:*** Going on dates is something that most teenagers like to do; however, there may be some cultural differences about dating in your home country versus dating in the United States. Talk to



your host family about their views on dating, you may be very surprised to hear about the differences. Before going out on a date, American teenagers must ask permission from their parents and because you are their newest teenager, you will be expected to do the same. Your host parents may want to know who you are going out with, where you are going, and when you will get home. If you need a ride to or from your date you should always ask your host parents. Most of all, be considerate and respect the rules of your host family.

**NOTE: Encountering inappropriate behavior**

All STS foundation host families are carefully screened. **However, if for any reason a member of your host family is making you feel violated in a physical or sexual manner or if you feel this conduct is abuse or could lead to abuse, PLEASE INFORM US IMMEDIATELY at 1-800-522-4678. Likewise, if a student or teacher at school is acting in a way that you deem to be inappropriate, please contact us immediately.** Although, past students have confused culturally influenced displays of affection, such as hugging, with abuse, please do not hesitate to call us at the moment you feel uncomfortable. We will then be able to determine if any misconduct took place and proceed accordingly.

## **WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT RELIGION IN AMERICA?**

Many families in the United States attend religious services regularly. This usually is once a week on Sunday, but it may vary from family to family. Depending on your host family and the community you reside in, you may or may not have the opportunity to attend religious services. In many communities going to church, means participating in social activities. Churches and synagogues frequently sponsor social events for teenagers, sporting events, trips and other activities which you may enjoy. Participating in these events is a great way to meet new people.

Your host family may ask you to attend religious services with them. As a STS Foundation exchange student we encourage you to try things that you may not have the opportunity to try in your own country. You are not required to attend church services with your family, but it would not hurt trying it for the first time!

There are American families that do not regularly attend religious services. If you would like to attend a certain religious service, you can ask your host family if they would mind taking you. We have found that many exchange students have enjoyed experiencing religion in the United States because it is so different from their religious services back home.

## **SCHOOLS IN AMERICA**

Your host family will take you to your new high school to register for classes. There are some required courses of study for students on the exchange program. Required classes are the following: English, American History or American Government.

STS Foundation students must attend school regularly and on time. You must abide by all school regulations, and maintain a “C” or above in each one of your courses. If a school reports an uncooperative attitude or has other complaints about a student’s behavior, disciplinary action

will be taken. If you are expelled from school for any reason, you will be canceled from the STS Foundation program and will return home. Your Local Coordinator keeps monthly contact with the school to ensure you are having a positive experience and adjusting well to your coursework.

### School Policies

*Each American high school has regulations which affect exchange students. You may hope to enroll as a senior, or graduate. Please be aware that this decision is not yours to make. Your high school may have rules regarding exchange students and graduation, and it is up to each individual school to make that decision. Schools also have rules regarding driver's education and the exchange student's ability to play varsity sports. Be advised that these are also school set policies and an exchange student may not demand or plea for any of these activities.*

### **Please note that STS Foundation does *not* guarantee/promise that a student will:**

- Graduate
- Participate in Driver's Education
- Play Sports
- Be a Senior
- Receive a Diploma

### Will I meet other exchange students?

There are many U.S. placing organizations like STS Foundation, and you may find that you are attending high school with a few other exchange students. Although, they may have applied through the same organization that you applied to in your home country, the other students may be with a different U.S. organization than you are. When you first arrive in the U.S. you may feel more connected to other exchange students since they are going through a similar experience as you are. You must resist the temptation to mix only with other exchange students. Try to meet American teenagers. Remember, you are going to the U.S. to experience a new lifestyle, culture, and language. If you spend too much time with exchange students you will severely limit yourself and your experience.

### Will I make friends in America?

In the beginning it may be difficult for you to make friends, but do not hesitate to initiate a conversation with someone at school. The best place to meet American teens is in school, either in class or through school related activities. If you like drama, join the drama club. If you like to sing, join the choir. You may want to try a club or social activity that you have never tried before or have no experience in. You are here to try new things, so don't be shy. Also, you may want to consider attending community functions. Your local church or synagogue may host a variety of events that are of a social nature. Remember, the more involved you become, the easier your adjustment will be, and the more people you will meet.

### Can I Participate in Driver's Education?

*If your high school offers driver's education and permits exchange students to enroll in the course, then you are allowed to participate in the class. If this is the case, then your host family and your natural family need to agree by signing the STS Foundation permission form. A copy of this form, STSF DRIVER EDUCATION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FORM, is in the back of this manual. Also, be sure you read and understand the STSF Rules and Regulations on driving, Rule #4. These are also in this packet. You are not allowed to enroll in private Drivers Education courses.*

### What Grade Level Will I Be Placed In?

The grade level you will be placed in is up to the school. STS Foundation can make recommendations to school officials about where to place a student, but it is strictly the school's decision. They determine your grade based on your age, academic skills, previous school record transcripts and level of English.

### How Much Homework Should I Expect?

You should expect to be given homework assignments every day and in every class. You should plan on spending a few hours each evening doing your homework. In the beginning it may be difficult for you, as the level of English may be more than what you are used to reading in your country. Do not let this overwhelm you. Take it one day at a time, ask your family for help and know that it will get easier as time goes on.

### Do I Need Permission to Stay Home From School?

You are expected to go to school every day. If you are ill and cannot attend school, you must provide your school with a written excuse from your host parents. If you are planning to take a trip with your host family, you must first ask for school permission. If your school grants you permission to travel, you must make up any homework assignments you may miss. Attendance is taken very seriously in American high schools. Be sure to be on time and attend all of your classes every day.

### Will There be Other School Activities For Me to Participate In?

Yes! American high schools generally offer a wide range of extracurricular activities. STS Foundation encourages exchange students to join teams, sign up for clubs, and get involved with their school. Here are some examples of the activities that may be offered in your school:

**Clubs:** Drama, International, Foreign Language, Karate, Honors, Chess, Debate.

**Sports Teams:** Track, Football, Soccer, Swimming, Lacrosse, Ski, Baseball, Basketball, Wrestling, Hockey, Volleyball.

**Other Activities:** Year Book Committee, Cheerleading, Pom Pom, Student Council, Plays/Musicals, Choir, Band.

### What About My Grades? Do They Count?

Yes! You must maintain a "C" or above in each of your courses in order to remain in the STS Foundation exchange student program. A student who fails a course may be placed on an "*academic probation*" until their grades improve. Remember, this is an academic program and your primary concern should be academics.

### American High Schools May Be Strange to Exchange Students. . . *Keep These Things in Mind:*

- Teachers at your high school are very easy to approach. You are encouraged to communicate with your teacher if you are having a problem in class.

- Teachers are called by the more formal Mr. Mrs. or Miss. First names are not used and are not appropriate.
- School lunches are not free. If you do not bring a lunch from home, you must pay for your school meal. Some schools do offer free or reduced-price lunches, check with your school counselor for more details. You should be aware that if you purchase hot lunches at school, you are responsible for the cost.
- American schools offer “*elective courses.*” These are courses which you may choose yourself. Elective courses may include: photography, drama, art, computers, literature, music, choir, cooking, mechanics, media/production public speaking, wood shop, and childcare. You can learn more about these courses when you register for classes.
- School books are usually provided to the student. If you lose or abuse a school book you will be expected to pay for a new one.
- As an exchange student you may or may not be permitted to participate on the school’s athletic teams. You can ask the high school counselor to give you more information on this issue.

### Can I travel?

Host family, school, church or other organized trips are encouraged, but there are some restrictions. Students are allowed to travel with a parent and upon approval from the host family and STSF. Unchaperoned travel with a group of teenagers is not allowed. Occasionally a student may be permitted to fly with his/her natural parent’s written permission, to visit a relative or family friend in another part of the United States. Prior approval is needed. Please let your LC know of any travel plans and follow the STSF Travel Procedures explained in the STSF Rules and Regulations. STSF requires that before any overnight travel can happen, the STSF Travel Release Form must be submitted, approved, and put on file at the National Office. This must be done **at least two weeks** in advance. You will find a copy of the STSF Travel Release Form under the ‘Important Documents’ portion of this manual. Contact your LC or the National Office at anytime if you have questions or need another copy.

## **FINANCES**

### How Much Money Will I Need?

It is very easy to spend money while in the U.S. It is important that you take this into account when you plan a budget for your trip. Before you leave your home country create a budget, discuss with your parents how much you are allowed to spend each month and try to stick with it. If you do not set guidelines for yourself before you arrive you will run out of money very quickly.

You CANNOT expect your host family to pay for your expenses. You will need to bring enough money to cover the following:

- Phone bills, postage
- Personal hygiene items: to be bought on a weekly/monthly basis like shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, facial cleanser etc.
- A school year book, school jackets etc.
- Fees for joining the band or musical instrument supplies
- Sports equipment, or uniform
- Recreational activities - movies, dances, games, shopping
- Extra travel with host family
- School trips
- School lunches
- Medical care (hospital, doctor, prescriptions)

You are expected to have your own spending money. Above and beyond these expenses, you need to have emergency funds that are immediately available to use at all times (in particular, medical expenses). Many misunderstandings center on money, so it is best if you are financially separated from your host family. **Do not, at any time, borrow money from your host family.** If you do not seem to have enough money for your reasonable needs, please let your Local Coordinator know.

As with American teenagers, you may sometimes need guidance in managing money. You should use caution when lending to or borrowing money from anyone. A money transfer from overseas sounds quick but it can take several weeks. Generally, students receive money in the following ways:

1. Transferring funds from a bank in your home country directly to your local bank in the U.S.
2. Parents send an International Money Order, via air mail, directly to you.
3. You may have an ATM card or an international VISA card in your name through your natural parents.

Banking practices vary from area to area and bank to bank. You may need your host family to help you set up an account at a local bank to which funds may be transferred from your home country. Your family may also choose to send an international money order in your name. You may have an ATM card or an international VISA card and count on it for funds. Be sure this card works before there is a money crisis. The card may only work at ATMs marked "Visa." You should never use your account or have a joint account with your host family. Keeping separate accounts is a safe guard for you and your host family.

*American Money:* The United States money is based on the decimal system. The dollar is the basis of the system. All paper money in the US is the same size and color. Take a close look at it before you spend it.

Ask your host family about U.S. coins. This may be a fun and informative conversation to have with your host family. While they are explaining U.S. currency to you, you can explain your currency to them.

A penny is 1 cent  
A nickel is 5 cents  
A dime is 10 cents  
A quarter is 25 cents

There are 100 pennies in a dollar.  
There are 20 nickels in a dollar.  
There are 10 dimes in a dollar.  
There are 4 quarters in a dollar.

Try doing some simple problems by making change from a dollar to make sure you understand the currency. Do this with your host siblings; they will gladly help you understand money.

*Sales Tax:* Almost every State in the U.S. has a sales tax. This tax is automatically added onto your bill. When you go to purchase something it will have a price on it. When you pay for the item, tax will be added on. Sales tax can range from state to state, but usually ranges between 4%-6%.

Here is an example: A pair of jeans might cost \$25.00, but when you bring them to the cashier, the jeans are now \$26.50. How much was the tax?

*Tipping:* In American restaurants it is customary to tip the waiter/ waitress 15% of the bill. You can either leave a tip in cash on the table, or you can write it on your receipt if you pay by credit card. Before you go to a restaurant you and your friends should determine how you will pay the bill. You should only have to pay for your portion of the bill, including tip.

- *More about tipping:* You should also know that it is common for Americans to tip taxi drivers, hair dressers, and some hotel employees. You do NOT need to tip in fast food restaurants like McDonalds or Burger King.

## **RULES FOR STS FOUNDATION EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

You are expected to follow the rules of STS Foundation. As an STS Foundation student you have signed a “Rules Agreement” when filling out your application. **YOU MUST FOLLOW THESE RULES, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.** Any violation of these rules will result in expulsion from this program.

On the following page you will find a copy of the document you have all signed and agreed to in your Student Application.

## **STSF RULES FOR J1 STUDENTS IN THE USA**

1. Respect and uphold all of your Host Family's rules and regulations, including but not limited to curfews, household chores for which you are responsible, computer and phone usage, smoking and dating. Activities, including inviting guests to the Host Family's home, must be approved by your Host Family. Host Family must know where you are, with whom, and when you will return, at all times. No Exceptions.
2. No drinking of alcoholic beverages, including beer or wine.
3. No drugs or association with anyone involved in drugs in any way. This includes the sale, possession, or being in the presence of others using drugs of any kind.
4. No driving of cars or motorcycles is allowed at any time. The only exception to this rule is if the local high school offers and allows the student to enroll and take Theoretical and Practical Driver Education Program for the sole purpose of obtaining an American driver's license. The student, the natural parents and/or legal guardians, and the Host Family must sign the official STSF DRIVER EDUCATION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FORM and follow the conditions stated therein. Special written permission must be obtained from natural parents, the host family and the student's STSF RC in order for the student to be permitted to drive any motorized vehicle, i.e. tractor, all-terrain vehicle, snowmobile, motorbike, etc. An STSF HIGH RISK ACTIVITY FORM must be completed, signed and on file with the national office before any such activity can be considered. There is no guarantee the activity will be approved and cannot be initiated until it has been formally approved by STSF.
5. It has been arranged for you to attend school and attendance is obligatory. A student is expected to maintain a C or above for each of their classes. If the student demonstrates a lack of effort in any class, documented by the school official or reported, they may be dismissed from the exchange program. This also applies to students expelled from their American High School.
6. No student is permitted to travel outside the local area either by themselves or with other teenagers. The local area will be defined by your LC. Overnight Traveling is allowed only with an approved group such as a school or church sponsored group, or with an adult person approved by the Host Family. With prior written permission, a student can fly alone to visit a relative or family known by the natural parents or the Host Family. An STSF TRAVEL RELEASE FORM must be completed and approved 2 weeks in advance for all overnight travel outside of the local area and on file with the national office before any travel can take place.
7. If the student travels outside the United States with their Host Family they must first apply for and receive approval for the trip (STSF Travel Release Form). After approval the student must check with the STSF National Office so that the proper validation of their visa is completed to allow for

U.S. Immigrations Officials to permit re-entry into the United States. **The student's DS-2019 must be sent to the National Office to be signed prior to any departure outside the U.S.** by the STSF Responsible Officer or an STSF Alternate Responsible Officer at the STSF National Office. The visa should be sent by registered mail. Allow a minimum of two weeks for turnaround.

8. Hitchhiking or soliciting a ride from a stranger can be dangerous and is prohibited.
9. If an application is completed indicating the student to be a non-smoker, they must not smoke during the exchange program. Those who indicate that they smoke are expected to discuss their smoking habits with the Host Family and follow the established household regulations on when and where smoking is permitted.
10. A student may not enter into any kind of contractual agreement be it business, religious, or marital. Students may not take a job outside their home during their stay in the United States. The only exceptions are occasional jobs in the neighborhood, such as lawn care or baby-sitting.
11. No violations of any Local, State or Federal laws of the United States.
12. The Student's personal property is not the responsibility of STSF or the Host Family. Any lost or stolen personal property of the student, including money, which is not covered by an insurance policy, is the responsibility of the student. Students are required to establish a bank deposit account separate from that of their Host Family. The Student's bank account shall *NOT* have the signature of any of the host parents.
13. STSF discourages natural parents or guardians from visiting exchange students. If parents do visit the student, the visit must occur towards the end of the exchange program. Only the natural family, not friends, is permitted to visit from overseas. Your brothers and sisters are permitted to visit **ONLY** when accompanied by the natural parent(s) and towards the end of the exchange program. STSF LC, Host Family and National Office must be informed in advance of such a visit.
14. All students are to return to their home country within 7-10 days of the last day of their schools year. No Exceptions. Remaining in the United States beyond the end of the exchange program is prohibited.
15. Finally, you must respect all decisions made by STSF Officials without exception.

## **WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN LAWS?**

The most important thing that you should know is that if you break any State or Federal law you will be sent home immediately.

*Shoplifting:* Shoplifting occurs when a person removes something from a store that was not paid for. Shoplifting is stealing. It may have only been a candy bar, but it is a crime with a heavy fine. Anyone caught shoplifting will be arrested by the police and taken to jail. An exchange visitor



will be deported and may not ever be permitted to return to the U.S. again. Is a candy bar worth this much trouble? Most department stores in the U.S. have hidden cameras to catch people that are shoplifting.

*Alcohol:* Any underage person who purchases or consumes alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine, liquor, and wine coolers is breaking the law.

STS Foundation students are not exempt from local, state and federal laws, regardless of the legal drinking age in his/her home country. You are not permitted to drive with someone that is drinking. Two reasons: First, you put yourself at risk for an accident; second, according to American law, if you have an open container of alcohol in a car, you can be taken to jail. You will be given more information about this during your orientation. Remember that you have signed rules stating that you will not participate in any activity where drugs and alcohol are available. If you are caught with either of these substances you will be sent home immediately. No questions asked! Please don't let this happen to you.

*Drugs:* No drugs. No excuses. Any contact with drugs, including marijuana, is illegal. STS Foundation will send home any student who is found using, selling or possessing drugs.

*Smoking:* Federal laws prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18. The majority of Americans do not smoke and do not want smokers around them. It is forbidden to smoke on school grounds. If you indicated that you are a smoker on your application you must discuss your smoking habits with your host family. You must abide by their rules and guidelines. They may not mind your smoking outside of their home, but this must be discussed with them in advance.

- If you indicated that you do not smoke on your application, then **DO NOT SMOKE**.

*Hitchhiking:* Hitchhiking is illegal in the United States. STS Foundation program rules forbid hitchhiking.

*Safety:* You should have a conversation with your host family about safety in your area of the country. Common sense on your part will be very important. Do not leave your host parents home without telling someone where you will be going. Your host family may ask that you write down where you are going and a number where you can be reached. This is for your safety. Please comply with host family rules regarding your being away from home.

## **STSF DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

STSF has three levels of disciplinary action. The process of each step depends on the severity of the issue being dealt with. The three steps, Student Warning, Student Probation and Student Dismissal are listed in greater detail below.

### **1. Student Warning**

A warning is the notification of unacceptable behavior that could become grounds for probation. The first step is a verbal warning – the LC, Host Family, Student, and possibly RC discuss the problem in detail in hopes of a resolution. If there is no resolution, a “*formal letter*” will be written to the student by the RC.

**Note: a warning letter is considered *pre-probationary* and may be issued in the following cases, but not limited to:**

- **poor grades,**
- **breaking host family rules,**
- **disciplinary problems in the community or school,**
- **or any other situations as determined by the RC.**

## **2. Probation**

Probation is *a trial period* in which the STSF staff determines whether or not the student will make behavioral changes deemed necessary to stay within the program. Based on information (Incident Reports and/or letters submitted), “*Probation Letters*” will be reviewed by the National Office before it is given to the student. These letters:

- **Clearly state what is expected of the student;**
- **What is unacceptable; and**
- **How or what the student needs to change regarding his/her behavior in order to continue in the STSF program.**

Probation letters give students the opportunity to improve. If improvements are not made, students are then at risk of dismissal.

## **3. Dismissal**

Dismissal occurs when the student is released by STSF from the Exchange Visitor Program. The Executive Director will determine student dismissals based upon the review of Incident Reports, Probation Letters, and the ongoing student behavior. If this behavior has been deemed unacceptable to the rules and regulations as set forth by STSF and/or is in violation of U.S. Department of State’s regulations, dismissal action will take place. Notification of this dismissal will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of State whereupon his/her Visa will be revoked after the student’s departure to his home country. *Please note – in the case of dismissal, all efforts will be made to support the student, thus ensuring that they have been given a fair opportunity to remain in the program.*

Students can be dismissed from the STSF Program for the following reasons, not limited to:

- **failure to make appropriate changes in response to probation;**
- **low or failing grades with no effort to improve them;**
- **psychiatric diagnosis, i.e., depression/psychosis;**
- **diagnosed eating disorder, i.e., anorexia/bulimia**
- **pregnancy**
- **life changing decision, i.e., religious conversion, marriage**
- **seeking to immigrate to the U.S. or change one’s Visa status**
- **expulsion from school**
- **inability to adjust to living with an American family following warning or probation letters; and**
- **failure to respect and abide by STSF rules, or any other behavior discrediting the STSF and/or Exchange Visitor Program.**

Immediate dismissal without warning or a probationary period will result if a student:

- **is caught using, selling, or possessing a controlled substance;**
- **is caught drinking and a police report has been filed; and**
- **has broken a National, State, or Local law**

# **INFORMATION ON SEXUAL ABUSE TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **Definition of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

Sexual Abuse is unwanted physical interaction including different types of physical touching such as:

- Being forced to kiss someone
- Touching private parts of the body unwillingly
- Being forced to engage in unwanted sex or sexual acts
- Being forced to view pornographic material
- Any behaviors that make you feel uncomfortable and continue after you have asked that they stop

## **Abuser Strategies**

Sometimes relationships between two people begin without any discomfort or inappropriateness. However, abusers sometimes prepare their victims to be victimized. An abuser may gain your trust by:

- Giving you special attention
- Asking you to break rules
- Sharing secrets with you and asking you not to tell anyone
- Telling you everything is ok when you feel uncomfortable

An abuser may also try to make you feel guilty or make threats to send you home early if you say anything. Be aware of these strategies and tell someone if you feel uncomfortable.

## **Internet Safety**

Many sexual predators surf the internet looking for potential victims. They often pose as teenagers in order to gain trust. As a rule of safety, NEVER share the following information over the internet:

- Last Name
- Home or Cell Phone Number
- Address at home or here in the USA

- Personal email address

STS Foundation recommends that students never post pictures of family members, friends or themselves on the internet.

## **WHERE TO FIND HELP**

If you feel uncomfortable due to attention that you are receiving, physical or otherwise, tell that person to stop it! It is never too late to let someone know.

- Your STS Foundation Local Coordinator is trained and ready to help you. You can find their contact information on your STS Foundation Identification Card.
- You can call 1-800-522-4678 at any time while in the USA to reach an STS Foundation national office staff member.
- Tell a trusted adult; they can help you.
- Tell a teacher, school counselor or principal if there is no one you can trust at home.
- If you choose to tell someone, you should know that some adults are mandated reporters. This means that they are legally required to report abuse to someone else, such as the police. You can ask people if they are mandated reporters and then decide what you want to do. Some examples of mandated reporters include, teachers, counselors, doctors, social workers, and STS Representatives. The reason for reporting is to help you and not to punish you.

## **IMPORTANT FORMS FOR YOUR YEAR WITH STSF**

On the following pages you will find copies of the most important forms for you to be aware of:

- **Student Travel Release**
- **High Risk Activity Release**
- **STSF Driver Education Agreement and Release Form**



## STUDENT TRAVEL RELEASE FORM

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Travel requests must be made **2 weeks in advance** of all student travel that is more than 2 nights with the host family or any other travel that is more than one night. **If request is not timely then travel may be denied.** Student must be in good standing with the school and host family and within attendance standards for their school.*

**Travel Plans:** Travelling to: \_\_\_\_\_

The trip is supervised by: \_\_\_\_\_

The travel dates are: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ through \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Mode of transportation: \_\_\_ Car \_\_\_ Bus \_\_\_ Train \_\_\_ Plane \_\_\_ Boat (Cruise Ship)

Companied by: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

This trip will cost the student: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ spending monies

Student will stay with/at: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRAVEL LIABILITY RELEASE** I hereby request permission for the above travel plans and understand my financial responsibility. I also hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the STS Foundation, its officers and staff, and all STS representatives domestic and international, and the host family current/past.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Coordinator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Host Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

School Signature (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Natural Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

STSF National Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

*Revised Version 4/11/2012*

## ❖ High Risk Activity

Certain high risk activities will need the below release form signed prior to participating in activity.



### **HIGH RISK ACTIVITY RELEASE**

*Version as of 4/10/12*

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **1.1**

We, the undersigned, hereby release STSF, its agents, representatives and employees, local high schools, counselors, and any host families from all liability, injury, damages, or claims which the undersigned exchange student may suffer or incur arising out of any event, act, restriction, or omission in when participating in the High Risk Activity *named below*, except by reasons of gross negligence of such persons.

#### **1.2**

We hereby indemnify and hold harmless STSF, its agents, representatives, and employees for and from any claim, liability, or damage to the person or property of others that the undersigned exchange student may cause or contribute to while participating in the High Risk Activity *named below*.

#### **1.3**

We understand that the STSF does not provide any insurance to the undersigned exchange student in connection with the High Risk Activity *named below*. We also understand we need to arrange for additional insurance and provide STS information about the terms, insurance period, and proof that premium has been paid before the undersigned exchange student participates in the High Risk Activity *named below*.

**High Risk Activity** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Natural Father or Legal Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date & Place**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Natural Mother or Legal Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date & Place**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Student**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date & Place**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**STSF National Office**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date & Place**



## DRIVER EDUCATION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last
First
Middle
Country

The undersigned, a STS Foundation student, and the student's natural parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) acknowledge(s) certain facts and release(s) STSF and the student's Host Family as follows:

**Driver Education Program.** I understand that I will be allowed to participate in my school's automobile Driver Education Program solely on the condition that I follow the terms, rules and regulations promulgated by STS Foundation. The current rules are summarized below.

### STSF Rules and Regulations

2.1 I understand that I may drive an automobile or any motorized vehicle ONLY when under the supervision of the teacher licensed to instruct Driver Education, and ONLY while participating in the authorized Driver Education Program at the high school that I am attending, and ONLY if said Driver Education Program is finished and complete by the first of June in the year which I am to return home, and ONLY if I have the written approval of my natural parents and my Host Family.

2.2 I understand that the only exception to the general rule in paragraph 2.1 above is to allow me to take the state driver's license examination. I may drive the automobile owned by my Host Family, with their consent, in order to practice for and to take the state driver's license examination, if that automobile is owned and insured by my host family, and if at least one host parent accompanies me at all times that I practice for the examination. If I receive a driver's license, I will give it to my host family for safekeeping until I return to my native country, and I will not drive any automobile or other motorized vehicle thereafter.

2.3 I understand that there are no further exceptions to this general rule, and no STS Foundation officer, coordinator, representative, or other person has authority to grant any exception. I further understand that if I break the above rules, I will be returned to my home country immediately and at my parent's expense.

2.4 I understand that I must wear seat belts at all times while in an automobile, whether I am the driver or passenger and whether I am in the FRONT or the BACK seat. I understand that this is for my own safety and I agree to comply with this rule at all times.

**Release**

3.1 Neither STSF nor the Host Family is responsible, in the absence of gross negligence, for any events which may occur or fail to occur arising out of or in connection with the Driver Education Program or the state licensing examination, or the operation by me of any automobile or other motorized vehicle, whether pursuant to or in violation of these rules or regulations, including acts of God, traffic accidents involving the student, governmental restrictions, or for acts or omission of persons or agencies not directly controlled by STS, including entities or persons directly related to the Driver Education Program, or the state licensing examination.

3.2 I understand that STS Foundation does not provide any insurance to me in connection with any of the events described in paragraph 3.1 above.

3.3 I hereby release STS Foundation, its agents and employees, my local school, counselor, and any host families from all liability, injury, damages, or claims which I may have suffered or incurred arising out of any event, act, restriction, or omission in the Driver Education program, except by reason of gross negligence of such persons.

3.4 I hereby indemnify and hold harmless STS Foundation, its agents, representatives and employees, for and from any claim, liability, injury or damage to person or property of others that I may cause or contribute to while operating an automobile or other motorized vehicle, including while participating in the Driver Education Program or taking the state driver's examination or otherwise.

**Signature of Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

I/we am/are the natural parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of the above student. I/we have read the foregoing Agreement and Release, and agree to be bound thereby.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Natural Father or Legal Guardian Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Natural Mother or Legal Guardian Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Host Father Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Host Mother Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
STS Foundation National Office Date

**Revised Version 4/6/2012**



## **WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS A CULTURAL AMBASSADOR?**

Being an international student in an American community, you will find that you will be representing your country to many people around you. This is a position that carries a great deal of responsibility. You will have many opportunities to talk and share ideas with you host family and friends. Many people will be interested in you and will want to find out who you are and where you come from. In this way, you will make a great contribution to international good will and understanding. Your role as an ambassador is important. It means that the image you project to Americans is how they will think of people from your country. We are proud to welcome you as an STS Foundation Exchange Student, and hope that you will make us proud, by setting a good example!

**Have a great year**

**and**

**Welcome to America!**

# The Exchange Visitor Program

## ***WELCOME BROCHURE***

Produced By:  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Private Sector Exchange  
United States Department of State

The Department of State welcomes you to the United States. We are pleased to receive you as an exchange visitor. As an Exchange Visitor Program participant, you will acquire an experience in the United States and as an ambassador of your country you will help educate the American people about your home country and culture.

This brochure will help you understand the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program and introduce you to some of the major requirements of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations that are most relevant to you.

### **THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM**

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE** administers the Exchange Visitor Program under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States with the expectation that on completion of their exchange program, they will return home to share their experiences.

**Sponsors** – The U.S. Department of State designates U.S. organizations such as government agencies, academic institutions, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations to administer exchange visitor programs. These organizations are known as sponsors. Sponsors screen and select exchange visitors to participate in their programs based on the regulations governing the exchange activity and stated in 22 CFR Part 62. Sponsors provide participants pre-arrival information, an orientation, and monitor their activities throughout their exchange program. Sponsors offer or identify cross-cultural activities that will expose exchange visitors to American society, culture, and institutions. Exchange visitors are encouraged to participate in activities that provide them with an opportunity to share their language, culture, and history with Americans.

**Responsible Officers** – Sponsors appoint individuals as responsible officers and alternate responsible officers to advise and assist exchange visitors. These officers issue the Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019), and conduct official communications with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on your behalf. Should you have any questions about the regulations or any aspect of your exchange program, your initial and primary contact is the sponsor. Unless provided specific contact information by your sponsor you should contact the person whose name and telephone number can be found on your Form DS-2019.

**Exchange Visitor** – An exchange visitor is a foreign national selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program and who is seeking to enter or has entered the United States temporarily on a J-1 visa.

Spouse and dependents - Some categories of the Exchange Visitor Program permit a spouse and/or unmarried children, under 21 years of age, to accompany an exchange visitor to the United States. These individuals are dependents of the J-1 and may apply for J-2 visas with the permission of your sponsor.

## **REGULATIONS – RULES**

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU** understand and abide by the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, U.S. laws and sponsor rules. Regular contact with your responsible officer will help you keep current of any change which may affect your J-visa status. Some requirements of the Federal regulations and where to find them are indicated below.

**Register with your sponsor – Your Form DS-2019 was created in a computerized system known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This System is administered by the Department of Homeland Security and is used to collect and maintain information on the current status of non-immigrants and their dependents in the sponsor’s program during their stay in the United States.**

**When you arrive in the United States, you must contact your sponsor to ensure that your data in SEVIS is accurate and updated. Failing to maintain your status could result in serious consequences and may affect your ability to remain in or return to the United States.**

**Activities and Program Provisions** – You entered the United States in a specific program category, and are required to engage in that category and the activity listed on your Form DS-2019. You must comply with the specific program provisions of the regulations relating to your exchange category.

**Insurance** – You are required to have medical insurance in effect for yourself (J-1) and any dependents (J-2) for the duration of your program. Some sponsors provide the required insurance for their participants. Other sponsors may allow you to make your own arrangements or may help to identify insurance carriers. Consult with your responsible officer before the start of your program.

(a) Minimum Insurance Coverage – Insurance shall cover: (1) medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500; and (3) expenses associated with medical evaluation in the amount of \$10,000.

(b) Additional Terms – A policy secured to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness, and must meet other standards specified in the regulations

(c) Maintenance of Insurance – **Willful failure on your part to maintain the required insurance throughout your stay in the United States will result in the termination of your exchange program.**

**Maintenance of Valid Program Status** – You are required to have a valid and unexpired Form DS-2019. Sponsors may terminate an exchange visitor’s program for violating U.S. laws, Exchange Visitor Program regulations, or the sponsor’s rules governing their particular program.

**Required Notifications to Sponsors** – You must inform your sponsor if you change your address (residence) or telephone number, or complete or withdraw from your exchange visitor program early. Doing so assists your sponsor in complying with their notification and reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. Failure to keep your sponsor informed could result in the termination of your program status.

**Current Regulations** – The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, (22 CFR, Part 62). The regulations are generally available for review at the offices of your sponsor, universities, law schools, or large public libraries. They are also available on the Internet at: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges>

**For Further Information** – Additional requirements that may apply to you are set forth in the Exchange Visitor Program Regulations. Review a copy of the current regulations and consult with your responsible officer.

**Contacting the Department of State** – The Exchange Visitor Program is administered under the oversight of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The Office of Designation and the Office of Exchange Coordination and Compliance are located at:

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**

Department of State  
State Annex SA-5, Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20522-0505

The office of Designation is organized under two divisions. The Academic and Government Programs Division, and the Private Sector Program Division.

Contact information and the exchange categories for the divisions are identified below:

***Academic and Government Programs Division (ECA/EC/AG)***

Categories of exchange: Government Visitor, International Visitor, Professor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, Student (College and University)  
Telephone: 202 632-9310 Fax: 202 632-2701

***Private Sector Program Division (ECA/EC/PS)***

Categories of exchange: Alien Physician, Au Pair, Camp Counselor, Intern, Secondary Student, Summer Work Travel, Teacher, Trainee  
Telephone: 202-632-2805 Fax: 202-632-2701

The Office of Exchange Coordination and Compliance is responsible for monitoring designated sponsors for regulatory compliance. Inquiries regarding sponsors and the Program can be emailed to Compliance by using [JVisas@state.gov](mailto:JVisas@state.gov).

**United States Department of State J1 Visa Regulations for  
Secondary School Students**  
*Issued: October 27, 2010*

[Promulgated Exchange Visitor Program Regulations]

**§ 62.25 Secondary school students.**

(a) *Purpose.* This section governs Department of State designated exchange visitor programs under which foreign secondary school students are afforded the opportunity to study in the United States at accredited public or private secondary schools for an academic semester or an academic year, while living with American host families or residing at accredited U.S. boarding schools.

(b) *Program sponsor eligibility.* Eligibility for designation as a secondary school student exchange visitor program sponsor is limited to organizations:

- (1) With tax-exempt status as conferred by the Internal Revenue Service pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
- (2) Which are United States citizens as such term is defined in §62.2.

(c) *Program eligibility.* Secondary school student exchange visitor programs designated by the Department of State must:

- (1) Require all exchange students to be enrolled and participating in a full course of study at an accredited academic institution;
- (2) Allow entry of exchange students for not less than one academic semester (or quarter equivalency) and not more than two academic semesters (or quarter equivalency) duration; and
- (3) Ensure that the program is conducted on a U.S. academic calendar year basis, except for students from countries whose academic year is opposite that of the United States. Exchange students may begin an exchange program in the second semester of a U.S. academic year only if specifically permitted to do so, in writing, by the school in which the exchange student is enrolled. In all cases, sponsors must notify both the host family and school prior to the exchange student's arrival in the United States whether the placement is for an academic semester, an academic year, or a calendar year.

(d) *Program administration.* Sponsors must ensure that all organizational officers, employees, representatives, agents, and volunteers acting on their behalf:

- (1) Are adequately trained. Sponsors must administer training for local coordinators that specifically includes, at a minimum, instruction in: Conflict resolution; procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations; awareness or knowledge of child safety standards; information on sexual conduct codes; procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual misconduct or any other allegations of abuse or neglect; and the criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercise good judgment when identifying what constitutes suitable host family placements. In addition to their own training, sponsors must ensure that all local coordinators complete the Department of State mandated training module prior to their appointment as a local coordinator or assumption of duties. The Department of State training module will include instruction designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Exchange Visitor Program; its public diplomacy objectives; and the Secondary School Student category rules and regulations. Sponsors must demonstrate the individual's successful completion of all initial training requirements and that annual refresher training is also successfully completed.

- (2) Are adequately supervised. Sponsors must create and implement organization-specific standard operating procedures for the supervision of local coordinators designed to prevent or deter fraud, abuse, or misconduct in the performance of the duties of these employees/agents/volunteers. They must also have sufficient internal controls to ensure that such employees/agents/volunteers comply with such standard operating procedures.
- (3) Have been vetted annually through a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry);
- (4) Place no exchange student with his or her relatives;
- (5) Make no exchange student placement beyond 120 miles of the home of the local coordinator authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from that exchange student's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program;
- (6) Make no monetary payments or other incentives to host families;
- (7) Provide exchange students with reasonable access to their natural parents and family by telephone and e-mail;
- (8) Make certain that the exchange student's government issued documents ( *i.e.* , passports, Forms DS–2019) are not removed from his/her possession;
- (9) Conduct the host family orientation after the host family has been fully vetted and accepted;
- (10) Refrain, without exception, from acting as:
  - (i) Both a host family and a local coordinator or area supervisor for an exchange student;
  - (ii) A host family for one sponsor and a local coordinator for another sponsor; or
  - (iii) A local coordinator for any exchange student over whom he/she has a position of trust or authority such as the student's teacher or principal. This requirement is not applicable to a boarding school placement.
- (11) Maintain, at minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the exchange student. The first monthly contact between the local coordinator and the exchange student must be in person. All other contacts may take place in-person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.
- (12) That a sponsor representative other than the local coordinator who recruited, screened and selected the host family visit the exchange student/host family home within the first or second month following the student's placement in the home.
- (13) Maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the host family. At least once during the fall semester and at least once during the spring semester, ( *i.e.* , twice during the academic year) the contact by the local coordinator with the host family must be in person. All other contacts may take place in person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.
- (14) That host schools are provided contact information for the local organizational representative (including name, direct phone number, and e-mail address), the program sponsor, and the Department's Office of Designation; and
- (15) Adhere to all regulatory provisions set forth in this Part and all additional terms and conditions governing program administration that the Department may impose.

(e) *Student selection.* In addition to satisfying the requirements of §62.10(a), sponsors must ensure that all participants in a designated secondary school student exchange visitor program:

(1) Are secondary school students in their home countries who have not completed more than 11 years of primary and secondary study, exclusive of kindergarten; or are at least 15 years of age, but not more than 18 years and six months of age as of the program start date;

(2) Demonstrate maturity, good character, and scholastic aptitude; and

(3) Have not previously participated in an academic year or semester secondary school student exchange program in the United States or attended school in the United States in either F-1 or J-1 visa status.

(f) *Student enrollment.* (1) Sponsors must secure prior written acceptance for the enrollment of any exchange student in a United States public or private secondary school. Such prior acceptance must:

(i) Be secured from the school principal or other authorized school administrator of the school or school system that the exchange student will attend; and

(ii) Include written arrangements concerning the payment of tuition or waiver thereof if applicable.

(2) Under no circumstance may a sponsor facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a written school placement has not been secured.

(3) Under no circumstance may a sponsor charge a student private school tuition if such arrangements are not finalized in writing prior to the issuance of Form DS-2019.

(4) Sponsors must maintain copies of all written acceptances for a minimum of three years and make such documents available for Department of State inspection upon request.

(5) Sponsors must provide the school with a translated “written English language summary” of the exchange student’s complete academic course work prior to commencement of school, in addition to any additional documents the school may require. Sponsors must inform the prospective host school of any student who has completed secondary school in his/her home country.

(6) Sponsors may not facilitate the enrollment of more than five exchange students in one school unless the school itself has requested, in writing, the placement of more than five students from the sponsor.

(7) Upon issuance of a Form DS-2019 to a prospective participant, the sponsor accepts full responsibility for securing a school and host family placement for the student, except in cases of voluntary student withdrawal or visa denial.

(g) *Student orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth at §62.10, all sponsors must provide exchange students, prior to their departure from their home countries, with the following information:

(1) A summary of all operating procedures, rules, and regulations governing student participation in the exchange visitor program along with a detailed summary of travel arrangements;

(2) A copy of the Department’s welcome letter to exchange students;

(3) Age and language appropriate information on how to identify and report sexual abuse or exploitation;



(4) A detailed profile of the host family with whom the exchange student will be placed. The profile must state whether the host family is either a permanent placement or a temporary-arrival family;

(5) A detailed profile of the school and community in which the exchange student will be placed. The profile must state whether the student will pay tuition; and

(6) An identification card, that lists the exchange student's name, United States host family placement address and telephone numbers (landline and cellular), sponsor name and main office and emergency telephone numbers, name and telephone numbers (landline and cellular) of the local coordinator and Local Coordinator, the telephone number of Department's Office of Designation, and the Secondary School Student program toll free emergency telephone number. The identification card must also contain the name of the health insurance provider and policy number. Such cards must be corrected, reprinted, and reissued to the student if changes in contact information occur due to a change in the student's placement.

(h) *Student extra-curricular activities.* Exchange students may participate in school sanctioned and sponsored extra-curricular activities, including athletics, if such participation is:

(1) Authorized by the local school district in which the student is enrolled; and

(2) Authorized by the state authority responsible for determination of athletic eligibility, if applicable. Sponsors shall not knowingly be party to a placement (inclusive of direct placements) based on athletic abilities, whether initiated by a student, a natural or host family, a school, or any other interested party.

(3) Any placement in which either the student or the sending organization in the foreign country is party to an arrangement with any other party, including receiving school personnel, whereby the student will attend a particular school or live with a particular host family must be reported to the particular school and the National Federation of State High School Associations prior to the first day of classes.

(i) *Student employment.* Exchange students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

(j) *Host family application and selection.* Sponsors must adequately screen and select all potential host families and at a minimum must:

(1) Provide potential host families with a detailed summary of the Exchange Visitor Program and of their requirements, obligations and commitment to host;

(2) Utilize a standard application form developed by the sponsor that includes, at a minimum, all data fields provided in Appendix F, "Information to be Collected on Secondary School Student Host Family Applications". The form must include a statement stating that: "The income data collected will be used solely for the purposes of determining that the basic needs of the exchange student can be met, including three quality meals and transportation to and from school activities." Such application form must be signed and dated at the time of application by all potential host family applicants. The host family application must be designed to provide a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment (to include photographs of the host family home's exterior and grounds, kitchen, student's bedroom, bathroom, and family or living room), family composition, and community environment. Exchange students are not permitted to reside with their relatives.

(3) Conduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home where the student will be living;

(4) Ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment and that the home is clean and sanitary; that the exchange student's bedroom contains a separate bed for the student that is neither convertible nor inflatable in nature; and that the student has adequate storage space for clothes and personal belongings, reasonable access to bathroom facilities, study space if not otherwise available in the house and

reasonable, unimpeded access to the outside of the house in the event of a fire or similar emergency. An exchange student may share a bedroom, but with no more than one other individual of the same sex.

(5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references from within the community from individuals who are not relatives of the potential host family or representatives of the sponsor ( *i.e.* , field staff or volunteers), attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;

(6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and is not receiving needs-based government subsidies for food or housing;

(7) Verify that each member of the host family household 18 years of age and older, as well as any new adult member added to the household, or any member of the host family household who will turn eighteen years of age during the exchange student's stay in that household, has undergone a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry);

(8) Maintain a record of all documentation on a student's exchange program, including but not limited to application forms, background checks, evaluations, and interviews, for all selected host families for a period of three years following program completion; and

(9) Ensure that a potential single adult host parent without a child in the home undergoes a secondary level review by an organizational representative other than the individual who recruited and selected the applicant. Such secondary review should include demonstrated evidence of the individual's friends or family who can provide an additional support network for the exchange student and evidence of the individual's ties to his/her community. Both the exchange student and his or her natural parents must agree in writing in advance of the student's placement with a single adult host parent without a child in the home.

(k) *Host family orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth in §62.10, sponsors must:

(1) Inform all host families of the philosophy, rules, and regulations governing the sponsor's exchange visitor program, including examples of "best practices" developed by the exchange community;

(2) Provide all selected host families with a copy of the Department's letter of appreciation to host families;

(3) Provide all selected host families with a copy of Department of State-promulgated Exchange Visitor Program regulations;

(4) Advise all selected host families of strategies for cross-cultural interaction and conduct workshops to familiarize host families with cultural differences and practices; and

(5) Advise host families of their responsibility to inform the sponsor of any and all material changes in the status of the host family or student, including, but not limited to, changes in address, finances, employment and criminal arrests.

(l) *Host family placement.* (1) Sponsors must secure, prior to the student's departure from his or her home country, a permanent or arrival host family placement for each exchange student participant. Sponsors may not:

(i) Facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a host family placement has not been secured;

(ii) Place more than one exchange student with a host family without the express prior written consent of the host family, the natural parents, and the students being placed. Under no circumstance may more than two exchange students be placed with a host family, or in the home of a local coordinator, regional coordinator, or volunteer. Sponsors may not place students from the same countries or with the same native languages in a single home.

(2) Prior to the student's departure from his or her home country, sponsors must advise both the exchange student and host family, in writing, of the respective family compositions and backgrounds of each, whether the host family placement is a permanent or arrival placement, and facilitate and encourage the exchange of correspondence between the two.

(3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances that necessitate a change of host family placement, the sponsor must document the reason(s) necessitating such change and provide the Department of State with an annual statistical summary reflecting the number and reason(s) for such change in host family placement in the program's annual report.

(m) *Advertising and marketing for the recruitment of host families.* In addition to the requirements set forth in §62.9 in advertising and promoting for host family recruiting, sponsors must:

(1) Utilize only promotional materials that professionally, ethically, and accurately reflect the sponsor's purposes, activities, and sponsorship;

(2) Not publicize the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc. that are not sufficiently in advance of the exchange student's arrival, appeal to public pity or guilt, imply in any way that an exchange student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately, or identify photos of individual exchange students and include an appeal for an immediate family;

(3) Not promote or recruit for their programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families, or schools. Specifically, sponsors shall not include personal student data or contact information (including addresses, phone numbers or email addresses) or photographs of the student on Web sites or in other promotional materials; and

(4) Ensure that access to exchange student photographs and personally identifying information, either online or in print form, is only made available to potential host families who have been fully vetted and selected for program participation. Such information, if available online, must also be password protected.

(n) *Reporting requirements.* Along with the annual report required by regulations set forth at §62.15, sponsors must file with the Department of State the following information:

(1) Sponsors must immediately report to the Department any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation or any other allegations of abuse or neglect of an exchange student. Sponsors must also report such allegations as required by local or state statute or regulation. Failure to report such incidents to the Department and, as required by state law or regulation, to local law enforcement authorities shall be grounds for the suspension and revocation of the sponsor's Exchange Visitor Program designation;

(2) A report of all final academic year and semester program participant placements by August 31 for the upcoming academic year or January 15 for the Spring semester and calendar year. The report must be in the format directed by the Department and must include at a minimum, the exchange student's full name, Form DS-2019 number (SEVIS ID #), host family placement (current U.S. address), school (site of activity) address, the local coordinator's name and zip code, and other information the Department may request; and

(3) A report of all situations which resulted in the placement of an exchange student with more than one host family or in more than one school. The report must be in a format directed by the Department and include, at a minimum, the exchange student's full name, Form DS-2019 number (SEVIS ID #), host family placements (current U.S. address), schools (site of activity address), the reason for the change in placement, and the date of the move. This report is due by July 31 for the previous academic school year.

[75 FR 65981, Oct. 27, 2010]