



## Host Family Guidelines

### International Academic Cultural Exchange, Inc.

23705 Vanowen Street #311, West Hills, CA 91307

[www.iacela.com](http://www.iacela.com)

**As you read these host family guidelines, you are giving an international student a great opportunity to study in the U.S., immerse themselves into a new culture, new school and build lifelong relationships!**

Thank you for opening up your home to an international student. Hosting is a great and positive experience given that you and your student have open communication. The first thing you should do to prepare for the arrival of your student is understand that the American Culture and the culture of your student are not superior or inferior to each other, just different. It will be great for the student to see, live and learn a new culture as well as for you the host family to learn about another culture.

Please keep in mind that your student is leaving his/her country, leaving their family for 5 or 10 months many for the first time, leaving their culture, living with a family they do not know, being taught in school only in English, and eating foods they are not accustomed to. They are not adults they are high school students so it is a very exciting yet scary time. The student is hoping to come into your home and adapt to your family and the way your family lives. Think ahead of how you can help your student adapt and feel part of your home and family. Please realize that the student will come with a different set of beliefs of their own. Please be willing to respect your student's beliefs as we expect our students to respect the beliefs of their host family. During your personal relationship, you will find that you will see different behaviors than Americans students because of their culture. For example: Americans tend to be very vocal and direct; Chinese students are soft spoken and are not used to expressing their emotions. Whatever country your student is coming from, the most important thing is communication. If there is problems re-evaluate what was said and how it was said. 99.99% it was a miscommunication. For example: One time a host family asked their host daughter what kind of anti-virus she had on her computer. She replied, "Norton" and they replied, "oh we have Norton also but we are going to change ours to a better one". She texted her monitor/supervisor asking her why her host family was going to change her anti-virus on her computer. What she misunderstood was one word "OURS". There is a big difference between we are going to change "ours" and we are going to change "yours".

Always remember that IACE is here to help with any questions, advice or intervention. IACE will be part of your live and the student's life for the academic year ensuring that both student and host family are having a positive and rewarding experience.

#### **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A HOST FAMILY?**

The most important factor of hosting an international student for IACE is to give the student a safe, caring and nurturing atmosphere and welcome that student into your home and family.

The host family is taking on the role of a parent, a teacher, a mentor, an advisor the same way we are with our own children. A student will be the most happiest and successful if he/she truly is made to feel like they are part of the family versus being a renter.

The requirements to host a student are:

- A furnished bedroom, a private or shared bathroom
- Three meals a day
  - breakfast can consist of cereal, yogurt, banana, bagel and cream cheese

- lunch should consist of a sandwich, piece of fruit and water (if the student decides to buy lunch at school it will be at the cost of the student). IACE will inform you if the school provides lunch as part of the tuition.
- dinners should not consist of a TV microwavable dinner ever or fast food most nights
- Students are required to clean up after eating breakfast and making their sack lunch
- Transportation to and from school if the school is not in walking distance from the home
- Local transportation on the weekend/school events i.e. the mall, movies (carpooling is best)

## STUDENT ARRIVAL

IACE recommends that students arrive one week before the start of school. This week gives the student time to adjust to the time difference, to their host family and to their new surroundings. It also enables the student to get over his/her jet lag before the start of school. You will receive your student's flight information from IACE. Don't be surprised if your student emails you directly their flight information; if so, please notify IACE. Be at the airport with a sign or banner welcoming your student so he/she will recognize you immediately. Be creative! Once you are settled in your car, please call IACE so that your IACE representative can meet you and the student at your home. Your IACE supervisor intention is to spend a short time with host and student until all feel comfortable. At times IACE enjoys picking up students at the airport but it is not always as there are several flight arrivals the same day so unless IACE specifically tells you they will pick up the student, plan on you picking up the student. Host families always take students to airport upon departure.

Please take into account that your student is experiencing many feelings: excitement, happy, nervous, scared coupled with the fact that they have just traveled half way around the globe and are exhausted. They have been traveling for 24+ hours. Please have a meal prepared so that if they arrive and are hungry they can eat, take a shower and go to sleep. If they do not want to eat, don't take offense they are just tired. If they do not speak a lot don't take offense they are just exhausted. Once you show them their room and bathroom, please show them how the shower works. They might not know what knob is hot or cold. Please show them where the bath towels are kept. Take a short tour of your home. Your student will not arrive to your house and immediately feel like it is their home and roam around the kitchen, open the refrigerator, make a snack. You should show them around the kitchen and where things are kept and emphasize to them that this is their home now and they should feel comfortable to open the refrigerator, get something to drink as they do in their home in their home country. You should offer and show your student a drawer in the kitchen where they can keep food they buy. If their room has a TV, please show them how it works. A very nice welcoming gesture for your student's arrival is to have flowers or a welcome home balloon. The next day exchange cell phone numbers and have a key made for the student. All students will get a local cell phone number by purchasing an American Sim card.

Your student is part of your family not a renter therefore; he/she must participate in the family household chores. In some families this might consist of helping to set the table, helping wash or dry the dishes/load dishwasher, etc... We encourage our students to be responsible and partake in common household family chores but not outside the norm i.e. walking the dog, vacuuming the entire house, cleaning the pool, etc... The students are required to clean their room and bathroom/do their laundry once a week. You MUST/Demonstrate and show the student how to clean. In most cultures the parents do the cleaning therefore the student will not know how. We suggest you clean the room and bathroom and have your student watch. Picking up the Windex and saying this is Windex to clean the mirrors and let them watch you. You MUST demonstrate and explain. **Your IACE supervisor will be sending out emails in regards to monitoring the student personally and academically, important information and school notifications. The host family must check their emails regularly and respond to IACE emails in a timely manner.**

### WHAT ARE THE SCHEDULES AND HABITS OF YOUR HOST FAMILY? (Student Copy)

Please ask your host family the following questions. Write down their answers. Your host family will ask you the same questions about your family / life in your home country. This exercise will help the student and host families get to know one another and what the host family expects from you while you are staying with them! **There are two copies, one for the host family and one for the student.**

1. What time does everyone get up in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What time does everyone go to bed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How late may I stay up? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does everyone eat breakfast together and if so at what time? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Should I make my own breakfast and if so what may I eat for breakfast? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Should I make my own lunch and if so what can I make? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What time does everyone leave in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How will I get to school and what time should I be ready to leave? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What time does everyone come home in the evening? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What are your favorite foods for breakfast, lunch and dinner? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What time do you usually eat dinner? \_\_\_\_\_
12. When do you usually bath or shower? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What time would you like me to take my bath or shower? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Are there any special rules I should know about such as where to hang my towel or wiping down the shower when I am finished? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Should I do my own laundry? If so can you show me how to do it? What day should it? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What are the rules for watching television or listening to the radio? \_\_\_\_\_
17. How do I lock the house? May I have a key or is there one hidden some place? \_\_\_\_\_
18. How often should I clean my room and bed sheets? \_\_\_\_\_
19. May I eat anywhere else in the house except the kitchen? \_\_\_\_\_
20. May I invite a friend to come over? How far in advance should I ask for permission to invite a friend over?  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. If a friend invites me to go out or to do something with him/her host family, how far in advance would you like to know? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you want me to give you the name, address, and phone number? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Are there any other things about your family or home that you would like me to know?  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Are there any other special rules? \_\_\_\_\_

**I understand these rules and will do my best to abide by them. I will not hesitate to ask questions if I am not sure about any of the things we talked about.**

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT ARE THE SCHEDULES AND HABITS OF YOUR HOST FAMILY? (Host Family Copy)**

Please ask your host student the following questions. Write down their answers. This exercise will help the host family get to know the student and what are their home rules and habits in their home country. ***There are two copies, one for the host family and one for the student. BOTH student and host family should retain their copy.***

1. What time does everyone get up in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What time does everyone go to bed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How late do you stay up? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does everyone eat breakfast together and if so at what time? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you make your own breakfast --what do you eat for breakfast? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you make your own lunch --what do you make? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What time does everyone leave in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How do you get to school and how long does it take you to get ready? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What time does everyone come home in the evening? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What are your favorite foods for breakfast, lunch and dinner? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What time do you usually eat dinner? \_\_\_\_\_
12. When do you usually bath or shower? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What time would you like me to take my bath or shower? N/A
14. Are there any special rules in your home such as where to hang your towel or wiping down the shower when you are finished? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you do your own laundry? What day do you do it? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What are the rules for watching television or listening to the radio? \_\_\_\_\_
17. How do I lock the house? May I have a key or is there one hidden some place? N/A
18. How often should you clean your room and bed sheets? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you eat anywhere else in the house besides the kitchen? \_\_\_\_\_
20. How far in advance do you ask for permission to invite a friend over? \_\_\_\_\_
21. If a friend invites you to go out, how far in advance do you let your parents know? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you give the name, address, and phone number of that friend/parent? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Are there any other things about your family or home that you would like me to know?  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Are there any other special rules? \_\_\_\_\_

Continued...

## STUDENT /SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

IACE students are expected to obey the school rules and be respectful to school administration, faculty, staff, students and host families. They are required to take 5 academic classes and electives. They may not change an academic class to an elective. Students may not be absent from class without permission from their host family. When absent the school must be notified of the reason (some schools require a note from the host family and some schools require the host family to email the school). If the student is absent from school for 3 days or more, they will be required to go to the doctor and have a doctor's note to return to school. IACE should be notified. Students are expected to maintain at least a "C" (70%). If the student is having trouble in any class and he/she is achieving a "D" or below, IACE may require the student to get a tutor at the student's expense, attend a special class after school, limit co-curricular and weekend activities until the grade is improved. If a student continues to receive below a 2.0 average at quarter and semester grade reporting periods, it may result in dismissal from the IACE program and the student must return to their home country. We expect all students to have good study habits, do homework daily and turn in homework the next day unless otherwise stated by the teacher i.e. projects.

## RULES

Students are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude and have respectful behavior towards their host family, teachers, school officials and fellow students. In many countries, the parents do everything in the home and the student's only responsibility is to concentrate all their time on homework. It has been stated in the Student Handbook that in America everyone in the family helps out and because you will be treated as a family member the student will be included in the family chores such as: set the table or wash the dishes, load the dishwasher, wiping the counter tops clean, bring dishes to the kitchen after dinner, etc... We want our students to learn some independence and responsibility. Student should make their bed every morning. Students are required to clean their dirty clothes and bed sheets once a week. It is highly recommended that the student pick one specific day i.e. Fridays so that there is no homework or Saturday mornings BEFORE they go out with friends. As stated previously, you must show them how to clean, what chemicals to use, how to use the washer/dryer, etc... You should explain the household rules to your student. For example, If you say you're going to be home at 5:00pm from the mall and decide to stay later you must call me before 5:00pm and let me know, we will meet at this location after school when I pick you up at 3:30 you need to be on time not late, you may not eat in your room and only water is allowed in your room, etc...

## IACE SUPERVISOR/MONITOR

You IACE supervisor will be in constant contact with you and your student throughout the 5/10 month academic year. We want to ensure a positive and enriching experience for all and want the student to achieve academically. Communication is the key to a positive experience not only with your student but with your IACE supervisor as well. We are here to help in any way whether it is just to give an update, to ask for advice, to clear up a miscommunication or to help correct any behavioral issues. It is imperative that if there are any problems/miscommunications, that you notify IACE immediately. First try to resolve any non emergency matters with the student. If things do not get resolved and you let the problem or miscommunication go on another week, it always makes matters worse. So please notify IACE immediately. IACE will be monitoring grades/attendance. **Be on time in the mornings as IACE wants no late tardies to first period.** If the student is not achieving a C or higher, the student will need to meet with IACE in person within the next few days. **Your IACE supervisor will be sending out emails in regards to monitoring the student personally and academically, important information and school notifications. The host family must check their emails regularly and respond to IACE emails in a timely manner.**

## YOUR FAMILY DYNAMICS AND THE STUDENT

All families have different ways of communicating. Your family has unspoken rules about how to live together, to get along and to respect each person's privacy. Your student is entering your home with no clue

about how things work in your family, what is expected, coupled with the fact that things are done completely different in their home country. Don't expect everything to happen overnight he/she has just arrived into your family. Be patient as you teach and guide your student along. Your student might feel like an outsider. Do not pamper him/her for the first few weeks and then put down all your household rules or chores for helping out. It is better to establish your family dynamics from the beginning.

In some languages they do not have word for "please". Therefore if your student says give me some milk it is not because he/she is being rude. English is this student's second language and he/she is trying his/her best to communicate properly. So instead of jumping to a conclusion, coach your students along the way in etiquette. You could say, "In the United States, you must say 'please' when you want something or some people will think you are not being polite (same for thank you). Like any other new relationships, this one will be full of unique and full of surprises. It takes time for the members of any family to establish their roles. The more you communicate your actions and feelings the more your student will reciprocate his/her actions and feelings. Like all successful relationships there will be some ups and downs and they key to success is communication. In a short time you will feel like you both have known each other forever.

### **CULTURE SHOCK**

Students will adjust differently to living in the U.S. The majority have no problems adjusting and some students will go through stages of adjustment. When students arrive in the U.S. they are excited, curious, everything is new, fun and adventurous. This is called the "honeymoon" period. Then about four to eight weeks after arrival, a student can feel overwhelmed by being taught in English only, having homework every night, frustrated by differences in American culture and their country, upset about not being able to communicate some things well in English, home sickness, miss their home country food, and /or and issues with their school or host family. This "culture shock" is a normal part of the exchange process. This challenging time will only last a few weeks and your IACE supervisor will be there to help you in any way if needed. Then the holidays arrive and the student has 3 weeks' vacation from school. Some students go to their home country to see their families so now the culture shock is at the back of their minds and everything is great once again. For those students not going home, they find the break from school feels good and they are busy doing many other enjoyable things and once again that culture shock is at the back of their minds and they are happy. After the holidays, the students are done with culture shock and done with the majority of the immersing process and thoroughly enjoy the second part of the year with less stress and experience a wonderful, positive and rewarding experience.

### **MONEY**

Students have their own spending money to purchase personal items such as toiletries, clothing, school supplies, cell phones, school expenses, entertainment and other incidentals with their own money. IACE recommends that students open a U.S. bank account. A U.S. bank account allows students to use a debit card, thus eliminating the need to carry cash. U.S. bank accounts also give parents the options of wiring funds directly to their children. IACE can give you the contact we have at the bank which allows the student to open a teen account with no monthly charges.

### **CELL PHONES**

Students must carry a cell phone at all times. IACE has all students get a US Sim card with a local area code which the student will pay monthly for.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Host families are required to provide transportation to and from school if the high school is not in walking distance. Host families are required to drive to local areas so that the students can get together with friends i.e. the mall, movies, friend's house as we do/have for our own children. Once some time passes and the student is comfortable with his/her surrounding areas, host families can show students how to use public

transportation but students must refrain from using public transportation until their host family and IACE feel that it is appropriate and safe to do so. They may not walk a mile to the Metro; the host family should drop and pick them up there. must not be taking uber locally unless the student asked for a ride last minute and the host has made other plans at that time. Part of the monthly compensation is for reimbursement for local transportation. It is very depressing if students are getting together yet there is one student who never gets to socialize because her/his host parents won't give them a ride. If the students want to go to Universal Studios for example, please notify IACE and IACE will provide the Metro schedule times. The best way for host families is to contact the parent of that/those friends and arrange to carpool. IACE will provide a distribution list of local host families who are hosting IACE students. Students may not ride in the car with a driver who has had his/her license less than a year and is under 25 years of age unless natural parents sign an IACE authorization liability form BEFORE they are allowed to go with that person. Students may not go to driving school, get their permit or drivers license. Female students who are taking uber together on a weekend in the evening once it get dark early in fall IACE requires only one drop off. So it is best if the girls plan a sleep over as IACE does not want female students alone in the evening with a uber driver.

### TRAVEL

Students may not travel **anywhere** outside the normal day routines unless approved by IACE in advance. Students may not go out of state without the prior approval of IACE and must be accompanied by an adult over the age of 25 years. If the students naturally parents have relatives/friends in the area and the student wants to go out with them, the student/host must notify IACE one week in advance. If the student is to stay overnight, the natural parents must sign an authorization form and the relative/friend must complete an authorization form for the natural parents to sign and give the name, address and phone of the friend/relative. **Students will not be allowed to go until IACE has received the completed authorization form from the natural parents and the person they will be going with. This authorization must be received at least TWO weeks prior to the outing.**

### FAMILY VISITS

Natural parents must schedule visits to coincide with school holidays so that participants do not miss any school. This includes if the student goes home to his/her home country during school breaks. IACE will provide students with exact dates of school holidays once a student is placed. IACE is happy to assist the natural parents in the recommendations of airport transportation companies, taxi companies, and hotel accommodations in the area. Natural parents may not stay in their child's host family home. Please notify IACE if your student tells you their natural parents are coming to the United States.

### GUESTS/SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Every host family must meet adults who plan to accompany or drive their student(s) on any outings. Students must come home directly after school on school days as this time is reserved for homework and time with host family. If the student wants to go to Starbucks to study or hang a little after school or to the gym that is fine but if IACE sees grades slipping or homework missing, IACE will take away that privilege. Socializing with friends is on weekends. Students must "ask" their host family and get permission to go out or to have friends over 2 days in advance and inform them where they will be going. Please note that at times the students might talk at school on Friday for an outing Saturday one day notice is sufficient on occasion. If you invite your student to an amusement park (i.e.) the student will pay their admission.

### FOOD

Students will be provided three meals a day unless the school provides free lunch as part of the tuition. If the student wishes to purchase lunch at school versus taking a sack lunch the student may do so at the students cost. At most private schools, school lunch is part of the tuition. If the student needs to purchase special foods such as: a potluck or school party, or any other foods that they like to enjoy on a regular basis the

student will purchase. Host families are not required to make special meals for the student or from their home country. The host family should prepare what they make for their family. Please ask your student if they know how to cook. If they do know how to cook, offer them if they would like to shop for the ingredients and show you how to cook a meal from their home country. Perhaps if you see the student really enjoys this ask your student if they would enjoy showing you how to cook a dish from their home country once in a while. It is also recommended if you notice your student likes a particular meal you cook, ask that student if they would like to watch you prepare it so they can learn how to cook it. This is a very special time you can spend with your student to bond. The student may not cook in the kitchen without the approval of the host family.

### **HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEMS**

In order to resolve and handle problems effectively there needs to be clear communication. Sometimes there is a miscommunication the same way as with a personal friend you meant to say something but it was misinterpreted in another way. If there is an issue with your student, you should try to resolve it with your student. You need to think about your side of the problem and try to understand the other side also. Do not think only one way...look at the whole picture...both sides. You will find 99.99% it is just a miscommunication that is very easily resolved. If the problem persists, please call IACE – we are here to help!

### **MAKING FRIENDS**

It is very tempting for students to only socialize with other student's from their own culture but this takes away from an opportunity to really have your student immerse him/her into the American culture and lifestyle. Spending time with only friends from their own culture, tells American students that they are not interested in getting to know them. If they chose to only socialize with students of their own country they will always be speaking in that language thus not improving their English. If they chose to only socialize with students from their own country they will seclude themselves from making American friends, they will speak their language all day at school, on the computer in the evening and on weekends. Please make it clear that the student must not speak their home language in the home. One of the goals to come to the United States for the student was to become fluent in English. The more opportunity they give themselves to speak English, the quicker their English skills will improve. PLEASE encourage your student to try and make an American friend, invite an American friend over to the house, or to go to the movies, mall with him/her.

### **DRIVING**

Students may NOT drive or get their driving license while in the program. They ALL want to but please let them know that no international exchange companies allow international students to get their drivers license as most accidents occur with drivers driving their first year whether the new driver or another person crashed into their car.

### **THANK YOU**

**IACE would like to thank you for opening up your home and your hearts to give your student the opportunity to study an academic school year(s) in the United States!**

**IACE is always a phone call away and we are local. We are available 24/7 days a week.**

**Here's to a WONDERFUL year!**