

# Guiding our Partnership

A Manual for  
ASSIST  
Representatives  
at Day Schools

F-I Visa Program

A detailed manual that will help us work effectively  
together throughout the year to support  
ASSIST students and homestay families.



**ASSIST**

*Today's scholars. Tomorrow's leaders.*

2018/19 Academic Year

## **The ASSIST Mission**

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ASSIST creates life-changing opportunities for outstanding international scholars to learn from and contribute to the finest American independent secondary schools.

## Introduction

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Since the 1969/70 academic year, more than 5,000 students from 52 countries have studied in the United States as ASSIST scholars. Through our unique partnership with American independent secondary schools, which offer scholarships to our students, future leaders of many cultures have come to know one another and have formed friendships that contribute to a more peaceful world.

Our school colleagues have been generous in their support of ASSIST students, and the common work of ASSIST and the schools has created an excellent foundation for our students. To provide a framework for this teamwork, we have compiled *Guiding our Partnership*, to present in one place all of the information that each ASSIST Representative needs to know.

The information in this booklet originates from four sources: our organizational experience over 49 years; the experiences shared with us by our students, host families and school colleagues; the regulations of the State Department; and the standards set by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). You will note in many places that we have established minimum standards, guided by the State Department or by CSIET, and you may well find that you already exceed these standards.

In the first section of the manual, we summarize the relationship and our mutual responsibilities. The second section of the manual includes excerpts from the CSIET standards.

**The key responsibilities of the ASSIST Rep are:**

- **Reading and referring to two important documents: *Important Understandings for ASSIST Students* and *Guiding our Partnership*.**
- **Recruitment of excellent host families, using as a foundation the CSIET standards.**
- **Meeting with each student monthly and submitting a brief report to ASSIST.**
- **Meeting with, e-mailing or phoning each host family monthly, and submitting a brief report to ASSIST.**

We hope that you find this booklet helpful, and we invite your input toward its improvement in the years ahead.

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## School Enrollment

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Each fall, ASSIST asks each member school to reenroll for the following academic year. A school membership agreement is executed, generally by the director of admissions (or enrollment management). In this agreement, the school informs ASSIST how many full and partial scholarships will be offered for the following academic year. A school must offer at least one full scholarship before requesting students who will receive a partial scholarship.

In the enrollment agreement, ASSIST lists the countries in which we plan to interview for the academic year being planned. The school may select up to five countries from which it would prefer to receive its full scholarship student, even rank ordering them if desired. We will use this as one part of our matching sequence during school placement. As well, if there are any special requirements of which we should be aware (i.e., host family prefers a young woman, only space in our 10th grade), please use this opportunity to inform us.

As you will note from the CSIET standards, we are not able to fill special requests for athletes. Our students are fine scholars first, and each also brings other special talents to share. We place students so that they can use these talents at schools with suitable programs and make a contribution while enriching themselves in the process.

## Student Selection

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With schools making a membership commitment in November, ASSIST begins its interview season knowing how many full and partial scholarship offers it can make to international students. Our colleagues overseas spend the fall promoting the program, receiving applications, and prescreening candidates. During the fall (Australia, Vietnam and China) and the winter (all other countries), ASSIST staff and volunteers interview finalists who have been selected through the screening process.

ASSIST uses the following criteria in selecting scholarship recipients:

- A history of notable academic achievement.
- A high degree of competence in spoken and understood English; evidence of competence in written English.
- An engaging personality, an instinct to learn and to share, and evidence of strong character.

- Talents and interests that can be utilized at receiving schools, including instrumentalists, vocalists, athletes, artists, debaters.
- Upon returning home, the potential to share what has been learned and to become a leader in his or her chosen field.

## Student Placement

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ASSIST concludes its interviews by the end of January, and by early March generally has received responses to its offers of scholarships. In March, the placement of students at individual schools commences.

ASSIST places students one at a time, taking into account the ability and talents of the student; the unique strengths and character of each school community; and requests made by the school for the upcoming academic year. Great care is taken to be certain that evidence of a good match exists, facilitated by ongoing contact with the school and a cycle of on-campus visitations.

Once these decisions are made, ASSIST presents to the member school a full dossier profiling each scholar. The school reviews the dossier, utilizing its own protocols for student admission. In almost all cases, the student presented by ASSIST is accepted for admission. In those few cases where the school feels the match is not an appropriate one, the dossier is returned immediately to ASSIST, and another candidate is presented. The dossier includes:

- An introductory write-up that summarizes the candidate's strengths and includes feedback from the interview.
- An application form and essay.
- An official transcript with appropriate translation guides (where needed).
- Recommendations from teachers and/or school administrators.
- The results of the ELTiS test for most nonnative speakers.

When the candidate is accepted for admission, the school first informs ASSIST of this decision. The school and ASSIST then both write the candidate to inform him or her of the acceptance and the award of the full or partial scholarship. Along with an official letter of acceptance, the school should send:

- An I-20 form and instructions on how to apply for the F-1 visa

- The admissions catalogue and any other materials that fully describe the school to the student and his or her family.
- The curriculum guide.
- Information regarding personal expenses for which the student is responsible.
- A student handbook and any other materials that will help the student integrate into the community.
- Once a host family is identified, complete information is forwarded to the student so that a dialogue can begin between the student and family.

## **Host Family Selection and Support**

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Since the student will live full-time with a host family or families, selecting a suitable family is one of the most important responsibilities borne by each member school. A great deal of the year's success will stem from this relationship.

All ASSIST host families are volunteers. No compensation is provided for the priceless services they provide, although a small tax abatement is available through the Federal government. We are all seeking families who see this as an opportunity to grow and develop new perspectives while providing a loving and suitable home for the ASSIST scholar.

It is most common for several families to host a student during the year. By sharing the responsibility, and by transitioning along school calendar lines (e.g., semesters or holidays), it is easier for families to envision inviting a student into their homes.

Provided below are criteria, suggestions and steps for selecting appropriate host families. In addition, you will find it helpful when you read the CSIET standards to guide you in this work.

### **Host Family Selection Criteria**

- A family that can willingly provide a nurturing, comfortable and stable environment for the exchange student.
- A family with demonstrably good character and reputation.
- A family with children who attend the member school – or faculty or staff members of that school.

- Adequate financial resources to support the needs of the student.
- A home in a safe neighborhood that is within a reasonable commute of the school.

**The following are recommended but not required:**

- A home that allows a separate bedroom for the student.
- Host families should have at least one same-gender child as the ASSIST student. It can be helpful, however, if the primary host sibling is not in the same grade as the ASSIST student. Common family interests also help.
- Both host parents living in the same household.
- Single-parent families are also acceptable candidates, but please contact the ASSIST office first. There should be mutual agreement among the ASSIST office, the school and the student before placement is made in a single-parent family.
- Parents who are actively involved in the school.
- Families that are internationally minded, have lived in another country, have experienced exchange themselves, or have international roots make good candidates.
- It is important to understand the responsibilities that the host-sibling will have to undertake and to select a family where the student is enthused and ready for this.
- Computer and Internet access available.

**Host Family Selection Process**

- Promote within your school community the opportunity to host a student. The most viable methods will vary by school.
- Receive from a prospective host family a written application (form provided by ASSIST), signed and dated, that provides a detailed summary of the family and the living environment.
- Ask the family to submit two personal references (forms provided by ASSIST) that attest to their good character and suitability to host.
- Conduct an in-home interview (forms provided by ASSIST) with the family, to include all members residing in their home.
- Ask the family to sign a standard agreement to serve as hosts for the specific ASSIST student.
- Secure the family in advance of the student's departure from the home



country, and inform the student of the family and living situation.

## Host Family Recruitment Suggestions

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Independent schools are excited about global education and the opportunities it presents for their students, families, teachers and the extended community. Translating that excitement into a reliable structure presents a number of challenges, the most significant being creating a culture of commitment to the development of a host family program.

### **Underlying Principles: Get the Word Out & Share the Work**

Schools that report the greatest success in reliably and smoothly recruiting and nurturing host families are those that take a committee or team approach, supported and endorsed by their head of school. No one person or department should be solely responsible for finding the host families. As well, utilizing every means of getting the word out (the age of communication intersecting with the close-knit nature of our communities) ensures a blanketing of the school.

### **Get the Word Out**

Work to raise the profile of ASSIST and the ASSIST scholar in your school community among the students, parents and faculty.

1. Use ASSIST materials
  - Have brochures from ASSIST ready to hand out to any interested people. Check with the ASSIST staff for the most current materials.
  - Encourage the perusal of the ASSIST website: [www.assist-inc.org](http://www.assist-inc.org)
2. Publish articles in the student newspaper, parent newsletter, alumni magazine, electronic newsletters, particularly when you are actively recruiting host families.
  - Ask your head of school to include an introduction of the program, in communications to the school community, highlighting the goal of global competency and community.
  - New schools could write about the program, with interviews of ASSIST Scholars at other schools.
  - Schools with a current ASSIST Scholar can highlight the background of the Scholar, his/her achievements on campus, as well as the host fam-

ily. Such publicity is a way to thank host families and also indicate that it is a privilege to host an ASSIST Scholar.the

- Use prose and information from the ASSIST website.
  - When sending out reenrollment contracts for school families, include a tear-off sheet that families can utilize to express an interest in hosting an international student.
3. Suggest to the faculty and coaches that they approach individual students whom they think would be good (one of the most successful ways to attract families).
  4. Have an informational gathering for potential host families.
    - Explain the program. Have ASSIST materials available.
    - Have an ASSIST visitor speak. Time the meeting to coincide with the visit of a member of the ASSIST staff or Board. An ASSIST student or host family member (current or from a neighboring school) could report on their experiences.
  5. Make ASSIST presentations at Parent Association meetings, student assemblies, faculty meetings, or Board of Trustee meetings. The presenter could be the school representative, an ASSIST Scholar, or a visiting ASSIST staff member.
  6. Make a special award or thank you moment for the host families and volunteers who support the ASSIST program.
  7. Make a special effort (e-mail, phone call, “catch them in the hallway”) to invite identified potential host families to these informational events.
  8. Consider including a question like “Would you consider hosting an international student for a year? For a half year? For a short-term period?” on a yearly family information form or school volunteer recruitment form.
  9. If you have current host families, recognize them publically (e.g., recognize the family at a school assembly, send a thank you gift, organize a thank you dinner with the Head of School, publish an article in the school newsletter that profiles the family and their ASSIST Scholar).

### **Share the Work**

The ASSIST representative is the point person responsible for decisions concerning the ASSIST Scholar’s academic and social well-being during the year. But the responsibility of recruiting and supporting host families should not rest on the desk of a single person.

1. Form a committee that could include:
  - the school’s ASSIST representative.
  - faculty advisor to the ASSIST Scholar.
  - Dean of Student Life
  - a faculty member who knows students and their families well and can identify potential host families, including music, dance and art teachers and coaches who might help match a family to a Scholar’s talents.
  - parents active in the Parent Association who can identify potential host families.
  - parents from former host families.
  - an upper school student.
  - anyone in the school community who has experience with or interest in international educational exchange.
2. Form the committee in the summer/fall, prior to their student’s arrival, to give it plenty of time to identify a pool of potential host families.
3. At some schools there is a standing “ASSIST Committee” or “International Relations Committee” of the Parent Association, enlisting the help of class parents and grade level advisors in identifying families. This committee might also enlist the help of families and potential host families in raising money for an international student contingency fund (to cover such expenses as the yearbook, a class ring, a prom dress or a field trip.).
4. Recruitment can come from families in Lower, Middle or Upper School divisions. Some families enjoy having a Scholar the same age as the student in the family. But, a year or more distance in age can also give the Scholar and host siblings their own social space and take the potential competitive edge off the relationship. Some families find that a Scholar as “Big Brother/Sister” with much younger siblings works very well.
5. Host families can be recruited for a full year, a term or a semester. Many families report that a full year gives the family and the Scholar an opportunity to bond in a deeper way, while other families feel that a partial year’s commitment is easier to make than a full year. Some Scholars report that multiple families mean repeated adjustments to a new environment and can be stressful, while others find it a broadening experience. A successful plan will depend on the commitment and the personalities of all those involved.

To lessen the idea that a year’s commitment might be too much responsi-

bility, the recruitment committee might organize support families (“aunt and uncle” families) who take the Scholar for both scheduled and spontaneous outings, occasional weekends or vacations. This gives the host family a break, and an opportunity for a potential host family to try it out. The Scholar and the host family then have a support network of other families to call on. These families might invite the Scholar on family outings to museums, ball games, movies, or to a weekend country house.

In cases where multiple families host the Scholar in a single year, those families should plan on some activities to ease the transition for both students and families. For example, the host families could have a few joint activities through the year, particularly at the beginning and transition moments. These families could also act as support families (see above) when they are not the actual host family.

6. Thank the host families and the members of this committee for their enthusiasm and commitment to international education and to ASSIST.

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## **Orienting the Host Family**

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- Provide the host family with a full write-up on the student, including the materials sent to the school by ASSIST.
- Have past host families meet with prospective host families – “Old meets New.” Sharing their perspectives, giving them things to think about, discussing the highs and lows, and answering questions are good ways to share information. Make sure first to brief/coach past host families on your goals.
- Ask the family to begin correspondence with the student and to provide pictures of themselves and their home, as well as details about themselves and how they live.
- ASSIST will provide its booklet entitled Information and Orientation for Host Families, as well as the book entitled Host Family Survival Kit, by King and Huff.
- ASSIST will communicate with both the host family and school regarding the timing of the ASSIST orientation and the arrival time and transportation details of the student.
- ASSIST will provide the family with complete details of the insurance coverage undertaken by the student.
- ASSIST will provide the host family with its booklet Important

Understandings, which outlines all of the important rules and regulations of the program.

- ASSIST will provide excerpts of the CSIET standards.

### **Ongoing Support of the Host Family**

Throughout the year, it is important to maintain contact with the host family to support them, thank them, and provide the opportunity to review and solve any problems that arise.

- CSIET requires that the ASSIST Representative maintain monthly contact with the host family. Each contact does not have to include a personal visit and can be conducted by telephone.
- ASSIST will send a contact log on a monthly basis to remind ASSIST reps to call host families. Please mail or fax the log to us monthly so that we can maintain a record for CSIET.
- ASSIST will write to the host family on an ongoing basis with helpful reminders regarding what to expect and what topics to cover with the host child.

## **Timeline for Host Family Program**

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Establishing an annual calendar increases the efficiency and coordination of the group that works together to recruit, orient and steward host families. Following the timeline reduces the workload and balances the activities that lead to a successful hosting experience.

### **December**

- Return enrollment contract to ASSIST with scholarship commitment and preferences for sending countries, gender and grade placement.
- **Designate or redesignate** an ASSIST representative within your school to be the liaison between ASSIST, the school and the host family. Notify ASSIST.

### **January**

- Begin working within school community to cultivate excitement and energy for the program.
- Consider utilizing best practices identified in “Guiding Our Partnership.” Over time, develop reliable methods that work best for your school community.

- Begin to identify interested families throughout the community for hosting in the current year and for future years (please refer to “Recruitment and Cultivation of Host Families”).

### **March/April**

- ASSIST will mail an ASSIST Representative Training packet to the designated ASSIST rep.
- Receive student folder from ASSIST. Have Admissions committee read folder. Contact ASSIST with formal acceptance of student.
- Send acceptance letter, school packet, and visa information to student.
- Share student folder with host family candidates.
- Introduce new student to the school community through online newsletter, school newspaper, school meetings and presentations.

### **April-June**

- If you have current host families, recognize them publically and thank them.
- Have interested host families fill out the ASSIST host family application packet. Return all host family application materials to ASSIST as soon as they are completed.
- Conduct in-home interviews with interested host family applicants.
- ASSIST will mail the Host Family Information Packet to the families selected.
- ASSIST will mail information on the host families selected to the new ASSIST Scholar.
- Ask host families to establish contact with the new student.
- Work with the host family to decide where the ASSIST student will set up a bank account and how it will be managed.
- Registrar’s office should begin to communicate with the student for class selection.
- Send required summer reading materials to student.

### **June-July**

- Continued communication between the host families and ASSIST Scholar.
- ASSIST will communicate travel plans to the school and host family. The school and host family arrange airport pick-up and communicate that plan to ASSIST.

## **August**

- 14th – 18th: Orientation at The Pomfret School, CT, for ASSIST Scholars.
- 18th: Students travel to their schools and host families.
- For schools hosting a student from eastern or central Europe, the Middle East, or Africa, ASSIST will mail their stipend check to the school's Business Office.

## **September**

- ASSIST office will follow-up with the host family to answer questions and to see how the student is adjusting.
- ASSIST rep begins to submit the student and host family Monthly Contact forms to ASSIST at the end of each month.

## **Beginning in October**

- The ASSIST Rep should notify ASSIST of any intended changes in the host family. The application protocols must be completed before a host family change may occur.

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## **Visa Process**

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The school is responsible for issuing the I-20 form to the student and providing instructions on how to apply for the F-1 visa. The ASSIST Rep should keep in touch with the person at the school responsible for issuing I-20s to ensure that the student will be receiving the necessary paperwork in time to apply for his/her visa.

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## **Student Acculturation & Support**

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We select ASSIST students whom we feel will adjust well to a new culture and make a notable contribution. However, every student will need some level of help, from modest to significant, in making their transition to a new culture, language, education system and physical climate.

Upon arrival to the homestay family, host family or school, we suggest that you have some low-level planned activities that help to introduce the student to the community of people who will form his or her new home. We advise that you refrain from organizing large welcoming parties but instead give the student time to acculturate at a pace the student finds comfortable.

Each school has in place a system for welcoming, orienting, acculturating and supporting new students, and in most cases, our schools have significant experience with this sequence for international students specifically. In addi-

tion to your own experiences, here are important milestones:

- As with the host family, CSIET requires that the ASSIST Representative maintain monthly contact with each ASSIST student. Of course, we encourage you to become as well acquainted with our students as your time and commitments allow – monthly contact is the required minimum standard.
- ASSIST will send a contact log on a monthly basis as a reminder for ASSIST reps. Please e-mail or fax the log to us monthly so that we can maintain a record for CSIET.
- ASSIST will write you during the year with helpful reminders regarding what to expect and what topics to cover with the ASSIST student.
- Upon the start of the school year, encourage the ASSIST student to become active immediately. Beyond classes, we have found it beneficial for the adjustment of the student, host family and school if the student “plugs in” during the first term. This may mean selecting a club, activity, athletic team or artistic interest to which they can contribute and from which they can learn.

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## Sensitive Case Management

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### **Conflict Resolution**

ASSIST Scholars will be faced with many challenges throughout their exchange year, and some students will be better prepared than others to handle some of these difficult and challenging situations or issues. As the ASSIST Representative, you will play a key role in helping the student to effectively manage and resolve conflicts that arise. Whether a student is struggling to connect with her host sibling or the student is at odds with his teacher, we know that you will work with the student on strategies to help resolve the situation or issue. It is important for the student to depart the initial discussion with an action plan of steps to take to help resolve the conflict, and then to have a plan to meet again with you within a week or two to reassess. Please feel free to call on ASSIST for advice and/or guidance with any situation involving a student or a host family.

### **Procedures for Handling Emergency Situations**

Unfortunate emergency situations do occasionally arise during a student's ASSIST year. Preparation for any possibility is an essential part of effectively managing a crisis/emergency situation. We know that you will follow the school's procedures for handling any crisis/emergency incident involving



an ASSIST student, first ensuring the safety of the student and others, and then immediately contacting ASSIST. We will contact the student's biological parents and work with you and the school to help manage the situation.

### **Procedures for Reporting Cases of Sexual Exploitation or Abuse of Participants**

**Sexual abuse:** Refers to someone engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or the opposite sex. Such activity includes both active and passive exposure. Additional examples of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to: non-touching offenses (e.g., language), indecent exposure, and exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material.

**Sexual harassment:** Refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or "groom" their victims. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: sexual advances, sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess, verbal abuse of a sexual nature displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings, sexual leering or other inappropriate physical contact (such as brushing or touching), obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

**Refer any problems or concerns you have during the stay of the student to the Head of School and to ASSIST. Do not wait to contact ASSIST until a problem worsens to the point that you are requesting to send the student home.**

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## **Our Partnership**

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The ASSIST exchange experience works best when the student, school, host family, and ASSIST work well together. In that regard, please call upon us whenever we may be helpful to you. We are available during normal office hours, but we may also be reached during the evening or on weekends if an acute situation calls for our experience and support.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead and to hearing of the contributions our students make to your school.

## Council on Standards for International Educational Travel

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ASSIST belongs to a number of organizations that support and advocate for international and cultural exchange. One such organization is CSIET, the organization recognized as setting the most comprehensive and effective standards in the field.

A listing in the CSIET Advisory List means voluntary adherence to a number of standards that guide how we conduct our business. Each year, ASSIST must submit an application to be listed, including questionnaires submitted by randomly selected students, school colleagues and host families. ASSIST has been deemed in substantial compliance with these standards and so is listed in this important publication.

We have excerpted below those standards that will help you with your work with students on campus.

### Standards for International Educational Travel Programs

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**Agent:** Individual or organization authorized to represent or act on behalf of the organization in administering one or more aspects of the program, for example, an overseas partner.

**Organization:** Entity that sponsors international educational travel activities.

**Program:** Organized international educational travel activity that begins with participant recruitment and selection, includes the components outlined in the standards which follow, and terminates when the participant returns to his or her point of origin or otherwise severs the relationship with the program sponsor.

**Volunteer:** 1. A representative who is compensated for out-of-pocket expenses only. If a representative receives regular compensation, such as a per student placement fee, this individual cannot be considered a volunteer.  
2. A host family that provides room and board gratis to a student.

#### STANDARD 1: EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A. Programs shall be designed to fulfill educational purposes related to an international experience.

- B. The organization sponsoring the program shall have clearly established goals and learning objectives to fulfill the educational purposes of its programs.

#### **STANDARD 4: PROMOTION**

The organization's promotional materials shall professionally, ethically and accurately reflect its purposes, activities and sponsorship.

The organization shall not publicize the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc, that:

- a. are not sufficiently in advance of the student's arrival
- b. appeal to public pity or guilt
- c. imply in any way that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately
- d. identify photos of individual students and include an appeal for an immediate family.

*Following are guidelines for public media advertisements:*

*CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be unacceptable: Urgently Needed, Don't let me be homeless, This is an emergency...*

*CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be acceptable: Open your hearts and homes, Host a Foreign Exchange Student...*

It is permissible to use a picture of a student, a first name, age, country of origin and a composite or generic listing of interests in an advertisement in order to demonstrate the personal nature of the program and the types of interests that students have. It is not permissible to identify that specific student as needing a home, nor is it permissible to refer to a student's athletic ability or accomplishments. Written waivers must be obtained for the use of any student photographs.

- C. The organization shall not promote or recruit for its programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families or schools.
- D. All promotional materials/activities shall distinguish the program and the sponsoring organization from others operating under:
  - a. affiliated or related corporate structures
  - b. the same or similar names or symbols.
- E. The organization shall fully disclose all fees, including school tuition, host family reimbursements, and other required or optional costs to prospective students and their natural families before enrollment. (If host families pro-

vide room and board gratis to the students, publicity should state that fees cover “selection and placement in host families” and not imply in any way that the fees paid by the students cover “room and board.”)

- F. Neither the organization nor its agents shall promote its programs as providing opportunities for school athletic participation, high school graduation, driver’s education instruction, household domestic service, child care, employment, or other activities that might compromise the student, program, or school. (Standard 4F specifically prohibits the organization and its agents (this includes foreign partners) from promoting its programs as providing any of the aforementioned activities. The word “promote” as it is used in Standard 4F includes any specific focus on or prominence of pictures and/or text depicting these activities. No prominent pictures and/or text will be considered to be in compliance.)
- G. The organization shall not state or imply in its promotional materials/activities that persons who are compensated other than out-of-pocket expenses are volunteers.

*Supplemental Guideline: Promotion*

*International visitors must have a clear understanding of the program in which they are participating, including issues of host family reimbursement, school costs, and student participation in sports, driver education, and graduation. The materials to be submitted for this standard should clearly confirm that each organization is responsible for the actions of its agents in the U.S. and abroad.*

*Pictures of students in cap and gown, taking driver’s education, or wearing sports uniforms may not be displayed prominently in brochures. CSIET particularly discourages large photographs, or the placement of such photographs on the inside or outside front and back covers of brochures. There is not a set policy about the number of such pictures, and the Evaluation Committee uses its discretion in judging whether such photographs are too prominent. If there are questions regarding the use of such promotional pictures, contact the CSIET office and your questions will be referred for feedback to the Committee chair.*

**STANDARD 5: STUDENT SELECTION AND ORIENTATION**

- A. The organization shall screen and select student participants on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.

*Supplemental Guideline: Athletic Participation in the United States*

*The following statement must be included on either the student application or other written rules document: “Athletic eligibility or participation is not guaranteed.”*

- B. Screening procedures for homestay programs shall include personal interviews with student applicants.
- C. Selection shall be completed sufficiently in advance of the student's departure to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation.
- D. Students shall be given a suitable orientation before departure and after arrival in the host country, including information on how to identify and report cases of suspected student abuse.
- E. All inbound students enrolled in a U.S. high school must have adequate English language proficiency to function successfully.
- F. All inbound and outbound students enrolled in school must have adequate academic preparation to function successfully.

*Supplemental Guideline: Student Selection and Orientation*

*5.5 Orientation: The Committee prefers to use the term "introduction" to foreign exchange for meetings, explanations, and interviews that are given initially to prospective students or host families who may be considering a program. The term "orientation" is reserved for a thorough process of preparation and familiarization given to committed participants.*

**STANDARD 6: STUDENT PLACEMENT**

- A. For programs that include a homestay, the organization shall:
  - 1. select host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.
  - 2. personally interview all prospective host families in their home.
  - 3. match students and host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
  - 4. complete placement arrangements sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from home to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation of the host family (Whenever possible, a student should be placed with a host family who has made a long-term commitment to host the student prior to the student's departure from his/her home country. In cases where this is not possible, a student may be placed with a short-term host family until long-term arrangements can be made. All short-term families must be selected and oriented according to the same criteria as are long-term families. The short-term nature of the host family placement must be fully disclosed in advance to the student, his/her natural parents, and the school principal, and be acceptable to them. Short-term families may, of course, also be utilized when a host family placement has not worked out and a new family must be found.)

5. provide suitable orientation and training to the host family. (When a family expresses an interest in hosting a student and a representative makes the initial home visit to explain the program, this is not to be considered the “host family orientation.” CSIET suggests that host family orientation include information on the student’s expectations about family and school life, customs, religion and mores of the student’s native country, the academic program in which the student will be enrolled, potential problems in hosting exchange students and suggestions on how to cope with such problems.)
  6. Vet all adult members of the U.S. host family residing in the home through a national criminal background check in the United States.
- B. Organizations 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. A direct placement is one in which either the student or the sending organization in the foreign country is party to an arrangement with any other party, including school personnel, for the student to attend a particular school or live with a particular host family. Such direct placement must be reported to the particular school and the National Federation of State High School Associations prior to the first day of classes.
- C. For programs that include accommodations other than a homestay, the organization shall:
1. arrange accommodations on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
  2. ensure the adequacy of the accommodations with respect to location, cleanliness, safety, nutrition, and supervision
  3. confirm the accommodations sufficiently in advance of the student’s departure from home.
- D. For programs that include enrollment in US high schools, the organization shall:
- a. secure written acceptance from the school principal or other designated responsible school administrator prior to the exchange student’s departure from his or her home country.
  - b. provide the school with the following information about the student:
    - 1) academic history, including
      - a) academic records, translated into English or other language as appropriate

- b) number of years of school completed prior to arrival, and number of years required in home country for the completion of secondary school
- 2) level of English language proficiency (for inbound students only)
- 3) appropriate background information
- 4) expectations regarding school experience.

Supplemental Guideline: Student Placement

*The use of the term “orientation” is distinguished from an “introduction” to foreign exchange, as explained above.*

**STANDARD 7: OPERATIONS**

- A. The organization shall ensure adequate care and supervision of students.
- B. Local representatives of the organization shall maintain regular personal contact with students and host families. (Contact should be initiated by the organization’s representative at least once a month be it by telephone, a visit to the home, personal contact at a gathering or other means. E-mail alone is not considered sufficient personal contact. Regular monthly contact is to include separate communication with the student and the host family in order to provide each with the opportunity to discuss issues they might not raise in the presence of the other. CSIET expects that there be formal documentation of this contact such as a monthly form, written journal, written log, etc. This is not to imply that representatives have to record every interaction. Rather it is to provide a record for the organization’s office of the pattern of student and host family adjustments, activities, and relationships through at least monthly contact with each student and host family.)
- C. The organization shall notify the student, host family, and/or other supervisor of accommodations regarding the travel itinerary sufficiently in advance of the student’s departure from the home country.
- D. The organization shall provide adequate support services at the local level to assist with program-related needs and problems, for example, counseling services, travel, medical care, language problems, changes in host family, emergencies.
- E. The organization shall maintain an effective system of screening (including a national criminal background check for U.S. representatives with direct in-person contact with student participants), selecting, training, and supervising program representatives and group leaders.
- F. The organization shall provide all students with an identification card that

includes the student's name; the host family's name, address, and telephone; the local representative's name, address, and telephone; the address and telephone of the organization's appropriate national office.

- G. For programs involving school enrollment, the organization shall maintain regular communication with school authorities.
- H. The organization shall provide an opportunity to the student, host family, and school to participate in a post-exchange evaluation.
- I. The organization shall have in place adequate plans and procedures for dealing with emergency situations that may arise during the program.
- J. The organization shall respond in a timely and appropriate fashion to complaints received from students, families, schools or others concerned with the program and its quality.

*Supplemental Guideline: Operations*

*President as Area Representative: It is not appropriate for the president of an organization to serve as an area representative because this leaves no person within the organization to whom a student, host family, or school can turn to for recourse, should a conflict develop.*

*7.9 When establishing a timeline for each of your programs, it may be useful to think in terms of an individual student and the timing of the many different steps of the program relating to his/her participation with you.*

**STANDARD 8: STUDENT INSURANCE**

- A. The organization shall guarantee that every student is covered with adequate insurance. Such insurance shall:
  - a. Protect students for the duration of their program.
  - b. Provide for the return of the student to his/her home in the event of serious illness, accident, or death during the program.
- B. The organization shall provide students, host families, and appropriate supervisor(s) with detailed printed information regarding the terms and limits of insurance coverage and procedures for filing a claim.
- C. Compensated officials and employees of the organization shall not receive compensation from the sale of insurance to its participants.



**STANDARD 9: ADHERENCE TO GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS**

- A. The organization shall comply with all appropriate government regulations regarding international exchange or any other activity under its auspices.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the organization to notify the Council of any change in status with respect to government designation, acknowledgment, acceptance, endorsement and/or sanction.

## Notes

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ASSIST is a nonprofit organization with tax exempt status and is incorporated in the state of Vermont. ASSIST is recognized by the United States State Department as an authorized Exchange Visitor Program. This special arrangement allows ASSIST to use the services of American facilities and staff overseas and has made possible the endorsement and support of international government officials. ASSIST is also able to facilitate the issuance of the J-1 visa under which our students study in the U.S. for one academic year on Exchange Visitor status.

ASSIST does not discriminate nor does it condone harassment on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other basis proscribed by applicable policies or laws.

**Robert A. Stanley, Jr**  
President

**J. Martin Milne**  
Vice President for  
School and Family Relations

**Stephanie M. McQueen**  
Director of Development

American Secondary Schools  
for  
International Students and Teachers

P. O. Box 969  
Suite 203 • Suffield Village  
68 Bridge Street  
Suffield, Connecticut 06078 USA

Telephone: (860) 668-5706  
Facsimile: (860) 668-5726  
assist@assistscholars.org  
www.assistscholars.org



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