

Information  
and  
Orientation  
for  
Host Families  
at Day Schools



**ASSIST**

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

J-I Visa Students  
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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Thank you for volunteering to open your home this year to an ASSIST student. We are grateful that you will host this special young person, and we hope that the experience will be a vital and enjoyable one for you. We have written this booklet to help you plan and cope with the transition you are about to undertake.

As a host family, you will have a direct and long-lasting influence on the young person who will be living with you. Your family will also benefit from the experience of hosting in tangible ways; for example, at the end of your hosting experience, you will probably have gained a broader perspective on world issues, increased your knowledge of another country, and gained deeper insight into the values and patterns of your own family and culture.

An intercultural homestay is likely to be more positive for both students and hosts if certain features of the experience are carefully thought about in advance. Accordingly, we are sending you some information that we hope will be helpful to you as you prepare for the visit. We will share with you some of the knowledge about hosting that we have acquired over 48 years of service and hope that it will enable you to develop realistic expectations; to integrate the ASSIST student into your family so that he or she becomes a full-functioning member; to help the ASSIST student to adjust to your culture; to deal effectively with challenging situations that may arise during the year; and to support the ASSIST student and your own family members, as you learn and grow in beneficial ways.



# Table of Contents

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Introduction .....	i
Learning from Alumni Host Families.....	1
Host family reflections .....	1
Host family advice .....	2
What Can You Expect as Hosts? .....	3
Communication .....	3
Welcome.....	3
Acculturation .....	3
Cycles of Adjustment and Acculturation .....	4
Friendships.....	5
Patience .....	6
Homesickness.....	6
Research.....	6
Adjustment .....	7
Your Family.....	7
Guidelines and Procedures.....	8
Guardianship and Liability .....	8
Health and Accident Insurance .....	8
Mobile Phones, National/Internat. Calling & Internet Use....	9
The J-1 Visa .....	9
Federal Tax Allowances .....	10
Personal Finances .....	10
Returning Home After the Conclusion of the Exchange.....	10
Travel Outside the United States .....	11
Driver's Education Course .....	11
Support and ASSISTance .....	12
ASSIST Rules & Regulations .....	12
Orientation and Travel.....	13
A Final Thought for Host Families .....	14
State Department Regulations.....	15
CSIET Standards.....	27



## Learning from Alumni Host Families

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One of the most productive ways to learn about being a host family is to benefit from the experience of those who have preceded you. We have included below reflections and advice from alumni host families to share with you a sense for the hosting experience.

### Host family reflections

*We were fortunate to have a young man who was smart, kind and considerate. We hate to see him leave and plan to keep up with the relationship.*

*We have hosted 5 ASSIST students – all delightful young people. We have formed life long friendships with these families.*

*We were very fortunate to host a wonderful young man from Slovakia. He was very mature, respectful and prepared for this experience.*

*Our family has had a great experience. That does not mean that there were no bumps in the road. Adding another teenager in a home with three female teenagers already can cause some interesting dynamics. Our younger son had a perfect relationship with our student. She really became one of his “big sisters.”*

*We learned about as much as Magdalena did. Hosting her has taught us a lot about ourselves and how we work as a family.*

*Our family is a better family with Quyen. We eat together almost every night and have interesting conversations about Vietnam and Chicago and all those weird cultural things most Americans take for granted.*

*Our extended family connected with another family living in a part of the world we were totally unfamiliar with. We now care about the economy of Lithuania, U.S. foreign policy’s impact on the Baltic region and Russian foreign policy’s impact on the region.*

*ASSIST students are well prepared for their experience of a school year away from home. Every ASSIST student we have met is smart; fluent in English; is self-confident; is emotionally mature enough to last ten months away from home; is outgoing and willing to adapt to different cultural norms large and small.*

*My husband and I had serious reservations about hosting an exchange student. My daughter begged for two years to do this and finally we relented. It turned out to be one of the best decisions we've made.*

### **Host family advice**

*Treat them as you would want a host family to treat your child. When we traveled; when we went to sporting events; celebrated birthdays; had family dinners or said good-night with a quick hug, we included Goda as we would our kids. We did the same for house rules, dating rules, curfews and occasional discipline issues. Whenever we made exceptions we regretted them later.*

*Remember they are not your children. By that we mean you might need to make decisions or guide them as their parents would. Remember it is up to their parents to make the big decisions so involve them accordingly being aware there will be family or cultural norm differences. Be aware and reasonably sensitive to those differences.*

*Clearly decide what rules you want in place and how you want your family run with an additional member. Lay out rules, responsibilities, and chores early on. Plan to have weekly talk sessions to see if things are working or need to be changed.*

*Be sure this is what you want to do, think it through, as the dynamics in your family will change for a period of time. Be ready for more laundry, more food and more of your time. It was worth it for us, we made a new friend across the ocean!*

*What one receives has a great deal to do with what one invests. We put a whole lot into the relationship and we got back more than we imagined possible.*

*My advice would be to first understand the commitment – emotionally, financially, and the responsibility you are accepting. You are “her” parent, friend, confidant, etc. Your acceptance of another daughter and treating her like your own is key to the success.*

*Like most things in life, the harder they are, the greater the reward. Being a host family is hard at times – you have to be constantly mindful of how this young person is holding up – but the value this relationship brought to our family is tremendous. We don't seem any different, but the value will be seen in how we and our children approach and forge relationships with people from other cultures in the future.*



## What Can You Expect as Hosts?

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Each host family has a unique experience with its exchange student, just as each family has a unique experience with its own natural children. Thus, it is impossible to describe accurately what you can expect as hosts. However, we hope to provide general information that will help to prepare you for the experience. While some preparation is helpful to have a good relationship with the exchange student who will be coming to live with you, what is most important is a sincere desire to share your home and to accept the international student as a member of your family.

As is true in most situations in life, the greater the effort you make to insure that your exchange student will have a happy and profitable experience, the more personal satisfaction and appreciation you will receive.

Most families instinctively know what is right and proper according to the circumstances, but perhaps a few suggestions will help you to carry out your responsibilities as host and insure a good experience for all concerned.

### **Communication**

It is extremely important that you communicate with your ASSIST student and with his or her natural parents before the day of arrival. In addition, we have included some introductory materials that will help form a foundation for your developing a relationship.

### **Welcome**

Obviously, it is important to convey warmth and welcome when you greet your exchange student for the first time. Many people in other countries customarily greet each other, and certainly members of their families, with a greater degree of physical contact and affection than we do in the United States. It would be appropriate to accompany your greeting with a parental embrace or kiss.

### **Acculturation**

Give your student a chance to relax and become accustomed to the new environment. Most students are generally too nervous and tense after arrival to consume large quantities of food, and it may take them several days or weeks to become accustomed to our style of cooking and our eating hours. Therefore, you should expect your student to have a period of settling in as he or she makes the adjustment to your home.

Our experience indicates that it is inadvisable to plan a large party for your student during the first few days after arrival. Smaller gatherings at which relatives and friends might greet and welcome your student may be more appropriate.

We suggest that, if your child feels comfortable, he or she could introduce the exchange student to the Head, teachers and friends during the first week of school. Americans tend to be somewhat casual about introductions, but most international students are used to simple formalities and will expect to be properly introduced to young people as well as adults.

If you do not have a child of high school age, we recommend that you introduce your international student to other teenagers with whom you are acquainted in the upper school. Perhaps one of them could act as a guide during the exchange student's first few days in school in the same manner a host brother or sister would.

### **Cycles of Adjustment and Acculturation**

The adjustment cycle is predictable, normal and healthy. Not everyone experiences all stages of the cycle, nor experiences them in the same order.

Stage 1: **Isn't that interesting!** This is when the newly arrived student is so excited about everything. Things are novel and interesting, and reactions are of pleasure and excitement. The student may be the center of attention, too!

Stage 2: **The thrill is gone.** Routine begins to set in as the student becomes accustomed to the environment. Things are not so fascinating now, and the work at school is overwhelming. The student is no longer the center of attention, and deeper friendships have not yet developed.

Stage 3: **It is not all I dreamed it would be.** Our home ways are better, and I'm tired of trying. Homesickness is setting in, and the holidays may be approaching. There is a feeling of being an outsider, and sometimes there is rejection of the way things are done in the new culture. This is normal and is referred to as culture shock or cultural fatigue.

Stage 4: **I'm beginning to feel that I belong here.** Spring is coming, and there is a rebirth with the passing of the bleakness of the winter months. The student becomes accommodating, and old values, attitudes, beliefs and ideas are no longer threatened in terms of the new culture. Assimilation has taken place. Things may be different, but they are not necessarily better or worse than at home.

Stage 5: **I feel at home here.** The final stage is achieved when the student completely accepts the foreign culture as his or her own. This final stage is not always reached, nor is it always completely positive. The student has achieved a greater empathy with a different people, and an enhanced ability to communicate with them.

Stage 6: **I have a new perspective of my own country and a fuller awareness of myself as a world citizen.** I feel I have greater confidence, direction and commitment. The ASSIST year is over. The student returns to his or her home country full of enthusiasm for the year and the many new experiences and friendships made.

### **Friendships**

Encourage your exchange student to make friends at school and in the community. To have an exchange student in your home is enjoyable and rewarding, but it can become burdensome if you as a family attempt to assume complete responsibility for the exchange student's social activities. In families where there are no children of the same age as the exchange student, it is important for the student to find friends in the school and community and to take part in many social activities independently. It would be beneficial for you to encourage your exchange student to make friends in order to have a well-rounded exchange experience.

Encourage your student to join sports teams, clubs and after-school activities. Becoming a member of the chorus or choir is a great way to meet many students from different grades. Whether they are varsity athletes or on the thirds team, they will meet people and form relationships. Above all, it is important to remind them that it takes time to cultivate relationships, and they must be patient and persistent in their efforts.

Those of you who have hosted students in the past can understand the anxiety and uneasiness that is normally felt by young students, thousands of miles from home, in a new country and culture. Your exchange student will not only

need the support of your family, but will also need the support and special rapport of people the same age.

### **Patience**

Be patient with your exchange student's use of the English language. Often, the newness of the situation and emotional factors prevent students who are quite competent in English from expressing themselves well. It will be helpful if all members of your family spoke more slowly and distinctly than usual, especially during the student's first few weeks in your home. You can help your exchange student by repeating or rephrasing any questions, if necessary. A little patience and help on your part will make them quite capable within several weeks. Since many exchange students indicate that they understand, when in fact they do not, and are reluctant to admit it, it is a good idea to repeat your advice and instructions. You should bear in mind that although many students may say "yes" or shake their heads in the affirmative, this does not necessarily mean that your message is getting across.

### **Homesickness**

Be understanding if your student is homesick. It is quite normal for all international exchange students to experience waves of homesickness, especially during the first few weeks. Temporary depressions or a tear in the eye following receipt of an e-mail from home, or the failure to receive a phone call from home, does not mean that the student is unhappy in your home. It is not unusual for an international student to be delighted with the new family, yet experience strong longing for natural parents and family. Feelings of homesickness are more prevalent during holiday seasons. This is also true for students who would normally be celebrating special holidays if they were in their own countries. However, should homesickness persist, please notify the ASSIST office so that we can help.

### **Research**

ASSIST will provide background information regarding the culture, history and customs of the country from which your student comes. It might be helpful for you to visit a library or to Google further information, which is readily available. In general, contacting the host family of the previous year's ASSIST student is a wonderful way to receive suggestions and tips for a successful year. If you have some previous knowledge of your international student's religion, social customs and foods, some of the initial strains can be avoided, and this would also provide a basis for meaningful conversations with your student.

## **Adjustment**

Although the responsibility of adjusting falls heavily on the student, there are ways you can help. Remember, first of all, that the process of adjustment to a completely new situation is stressful and exhausting, sometimes leading to a condition of physiological and psychological exhaustion known as "culture fatigue." Affecting some students more than others, the newcomer should be encouraged to get extra sleep and retreat temporarily from prolonged or intense social involvement whenever he or she feels overwhelmed. In addition, the newcomer should be encouraged to ask questions whenever she or he does not understand the norms or "rules" governing a social situation.

While your ASSIST student may not suffer "culture fatigue" at all, be aware that, if it occurs, you will see that the student may be depressed, anxious, irritable or isolated. It is important that you realize that you are not responsible for these symptoms, that they will pass, and you can help the student with as much empathy and tenderness as you can muster. Remember that you share the responsibility with the school and with ASSIST, and there are experienced professionals whom you can call on for guidance. In addition, your ASSIST student has received a thorough orientation from us about expectations as well as information to prepare and help him or her make a smooth cultural adjustment. Very soon after your student arrives on your doorstep, however, he or she needs the most specific information of all – how to become a fully functioning member of your family.

## **Your Family**

Before your student arrives, it will be important to think about how you function as a family. While it is second nature to you, your exchange student will need help assimilating into the daily routines and long-established rules and expectations of your family.

Take time to think about how family decisions are made and to what extent your children share in the decision-making. How are conflicts or disagreements dealt with in the family? How is transportation to or from school activities and social outings arranged? What are the specific rules and expectations that you choose for your teenager? How much flexibility will there be in accommodating a student who is accustomed to independence and independent decision-making? Other topics that might be addressed include: how your family meets its physical needs (including use of electricity, sleeping, bathing, food and drinks, etc.); how your family expects its members to behave (including appropriate recreation and dress, use of television, telephone, cell phone, computer, kitchen, public and private places, household chores, etc.); and the special situations of your family. While it is important for you to provide this

information promptly, it is also important not to overwhelm the student on a single occasion.

It is important to note that, in this era of computers, Skype, cell phones, etc., exchange students can have too much contact with their families and with their home countries, and this can actually harm their process of assimilation. Limiting computer time can help your student to adjust more quickly and to make friends more easily.

Explain the rules you wish to have followed, and point out why they are important to you. The rules that apply to your own children should also apply to the ASSIST student, although an exception might be made under special circumstances. Be ready for the possibility that the student will turn out to be more (or less) mature than you expected, and be flexible. It is important that you feel free to say "no" whenever necessary. The most important factor is to develop a relationship between you and your student that permits openness, trust and goodwill.

## **Guidelines and Procedures**

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### **Guardianship and Liability**

Host parents are not the legal guardians of the ASSIST students living in their homes – the student’s natural parents or legal guardians in the home country always retain this authority. Host parents may not sign any document for the ASSIST student which requests the signature of his or her natural parents, except for school permission forms for participation on school sports teams or participation in other school-related activities or field trips. When signing such school permission forms, the host parents must cross out the words parents/legal guardians and write in “host family” so that the relationship to the ASSIST student is clear.

ASSIST does not provide any liability insurance for the host parents or for the ASSIST student and is not responsible for any damages caused by the ASSIST student or for any claims for damages or injuries brought against the host family by the ASSIST student or his or her natural family. Families should consult individual home owner’s policies to determine their coverage.

### **Health and Accident Insurance**

Should your exchange student become ill or injured and require a visit to the doctor, you are asked to provide the best medical attention possible, as you

would for your own child. You are not, however, expected to pay medical bills, and all exchange students are covered by medical and accident insurance. The student should be prepared to pay the doctor at the time of the visit and then file a claim for reimbursement. The student and the school have copies of all medical and insurance forms.

We advise that you sit down with your ASSIST student and review their medical insurance with them. All students have signed a Parental Release for Medical Emergency form, which covers ASSIST, the school and the host family in the event of an emergency. Please ask your student for a copy of this form.

Your student is covered by medical insurance, a ten- or eleven-month travel insurance program, offered through ASSIST or through the school. The policy offers a comprehensive health insurance plan that will cover your student in the event of illness or injury. More complete information regarding the policy will be mailed to you in advance of your student's arrival.

Should you need to take your student to see a doctor, please ask the student to put your name on the HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) form that he or she will be asked to complete. This will allow the doctor's office to release information to you *en loco parentis*. You will want to keep a copy of your student's insurance card and claim form in your files for easy access.

### **Mobile Phones, National/International Calling and Internet Use**

The use of technology to communicate around the globe has become an ever-present fixture in our lives. You may find that you already struggle with these issues in your family. For international students, there are additional concerns around the use of communications technologies. Frequent telephone conversations, e-mails, Skyping or FaceBook interaction with the natural parents or friends make it difficult for the exchange student to adjust and establish a close relationship with the host family. Therefore, we have developed guidelines for our students to help them self-monitor their use of technology. We suggest you also read these guidelines, which are contained in Important Understandings. Addressing these guidelines in advance, and any issues while they are small, can help ease what can otherwise be a source of friction or disagreement.

### **The J-1 Visa**

Your ASSIST student is allowed to study in the U.S. through the State Department's J-1 visa program. We have included the relevant regulations in

the section entitled State Department Regulations. We have reviewed this information with your student, and it is also important that you understand the J-1 regulations. In this booklet, we have highlighted areas with which you will want to be familiar, particularly travel outside of the U.S. during the exchange year.

### **Federal Tax Allowance**

As a host family, you may be entitled to a tax-deduction of up to \$50.00 per month for the period of time during which you host your ASSIST student. The current tax allowance, according to the code of Federal Regulations, vol.26, section 1.170A-2, states that you may take a tax deduction of \$50.00 per month if you can meet the following guidelines:

- The student you host must attend school on a full-time basis; must attend a day school (not boarding); cannot be a dependent or relative of the host family.

### **Personal Finances**

In general, we recommend that money for the student's personal expenses be kept in an account opened at the school or at a local bank. The students have been told it is not wise to keep large amounts of cash. Some will utilize credit cards or ATM cards for expenses. Some students may need your help with managing their finances, especially with spending steadily over the course of a year for those students on limited allowances.

The student is expected to finance out-of-pocket expenses – it is not expected of you as a family. This includes financing their own vacation travel and expenses. Host families often take their ASSIST students as guests on planned family vacations, but the student can contribute to these expenses. Trips taken independently should be funded independently (through the student's allowance or by the natural family). Please contact ASSIST if your student does not seem to have sufficient funding or is spending too much too soon or imprudently.

### **Returning Home after the Conclusion of the Exchange**

Our international students must return to their countries at the conclusion of the exchange. You may invite the student to extend his or her stay, or invite the student's parents to visit, as long as it does not extend beyond the conclusion of the visa period. However, you should not feel obligated to offer these invitations, and the student should not ask this of you.



Students who remain in the host country for an indefinite period following the conclusion of the exchange jeopardize the ability of future students from their countries to have similar experiences, as well as the future of the ASSIST program.

What truly makes ASSIST an exchange program is having students return and share their new insights with their friends, family and peers. We want as many students as possible to be exposed to cross-cultural exchange.

Some ASSIST students will wish to return to the States, after a year at home, to attend university here. We support this goal, but it must not interfere with the commitment to the ASSIST year, nor are you expected to facilitate college visits, interviews or research. You may help as you are interested to do so. This issue has been addressed with students in *Important Understandings*, and we encourage you to review that section.

### **Travel Outside the United States**

During the ASSIST year, permission to travel to another country cannot be granted without (a) a letter from the natural family giving the student permission to go to that country, and (b) a letter of invitation from the family or organization that will be hosting the ASSIST student (if other than you), and (c) your ASSIST student must also mail the DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility to the ASSIST office in Connecticut before he or she takes any trip outside of the United States so that we may sign it. Without our signature, the student might not be allowed to reenter the country or may be fined when reentering the country. As well, the student should plan to consult an official in the consulate of the country to which he or she plans to travel – requirements vary, both by country of destination and by country of citizenship. Leave plenty of time to get all of this done, as the entire process can take a month.

Permission to travel to Canada (which may also require a visa), Bermuda, the Bahamas and Mexico is generally granted by ASSIST, assuming that the student has followed the steps outlined above. If your ASSIST student desires to travel to a country other than those noted, permission must be sought, *in advance of making plans*, with the ASSIST office in Suffield. Permission will be granted in those instances where the educational value of the trip is significant and enhances the overall experience of the ASSIST year.

### **Driver's Education Course**

ASSIST students are **absolutely forbidden** to drive a car, boat, motorcycle,

all-terrain vehicle, or any similar vehicle while they are in the United States – even before or after the end of the school year. **There are no exceptions.** We ask you to observe this rule for your own protection and for reasons of legal liability. Equally important, ASSIST students may not enroll in a Driver’s Education course in America, since such courses have as an integral part of the curriculum the practice of driving an automobile, and this is not allowed. If the student violates this rule, he or she may be asked to withdraw from the ASSIST program.

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## Support and ASSISTance

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It will not surprise you when we suggest that not every day will follow flawlessly upon the previous one! Intercultural exchange, and opening your home to someone previously unknown to you, will create stress, and you may find yourselves in need of ASSISTance. While the answers may well be found within your family or your school community, please think of ASSIST as your partner throughout the time your student is in your home.

We encourage you to work locally first, meaning having your own conversations and involving faculty from the school, but please call upon ASSIST as you encounter difficulties for which you are unprepared. We have more than forty years of organizational experience in the field, and those resources might be helpful to you. We suggest, of course, that you identify issues while they are still small and involve us to help you work through them.

We will stay in touch with you during this experience, but we also encourage you to contact us in between planned communications so that we can offer our perspectives, advice and intervention, if that is indicated. Most host family experiences do not require ASSIST’s help, but please know that we stand ready to help if the situation arises!

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## ASSIST Rules & Regulations

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The ASSIST rules and regulations are captured in a booklet entitled Important Information and Understandings for ASSIST Students. It is mailed to students and their families in advance of their departure, and each student must sign a contract with us acknowledging their commitment to abiding by the contents of that booklet. Parents retain a copy at home, and students are asked to bring their copy to the ASSIST orientation and to their American home or dormitory room.

Each student receives this and other information – including the school student handbook – before departing the home country, and each student has an in-country orientation preceding the ASSIST orientation. During these meetings, the significant rules are reviewed with all students to remove ambiguity and confusion. By the time you meet your student, he or she should be very clear about the rules of ASSIST and the school.

We have included a copy of this booklet in this packet, and we encourage you to read it thoroughly and carefully so that you have a firm understanding of the rules for which the students are responsible. If you have questions about any aspect of our rules, we invite you to contact us.

## Orientation and Travel

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Each student will participate in the ASSIST Orientation program, which begins upon their arrival in the United States on Tuesday, August 14th, 2018. It is a four-day program designed to allow students to begin their assimilation into the American culture, to draw strength from experienced staff members, and to prepare for the year ahead.

Students participate in ice-breaking and team-building exercises, travel to Boston (where they visit the Freedom Trail, learn about our nation's history, tour Harvard, and site-see in Quincy Market and Faneuil Hall), and have fun and use their English skills. A day of classes is designed to orient students to the independent school experience and to answer the many questions they may have about school expectations, rules, managing stress, time management, and making friendships. The climax of the Orientation is an evening of entertainment in which students share their many talents: singing, dancing, playing instruments and having great fun.

The ASSIST Orientation ends on Saturday, August 18th, at which time your student will travel to your home or to school via bus, airplane or car. Your family and the school will be notified by e-mail of these travel arrangements. If you have any questions regarding travel arrangements, please feel free to call us.

## A Final Thought for Host Families

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Ultimately, the success of an exchange is generally dependent upon the host family's and the exchange student's willingness to build and contribute to the growth and maintenance of a relationship.

Suggestions, guidance and knowledge of the ground rules are important, but they must be integrated with your family's beliefs, goals and lifestyle to be truly effective. There will be many situations which may arise in which you will necessarily have to use your own judgment. We have confidence that your family will make the exchange a happy and enjoyable one for all concerned. All of us with ASSIST thank you heartily for the wonderful gift you are about to give this very fortunate young person.

Thank you again for opening your home to one of our Scholars. We believe this will be a positive, life-changing experience for your ASSIST student and for your entire family.

## State Department Regulations

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ASSIST is recognized by the United States Department of State as a designated Exchange Visitor Program. ASSIST is 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's model builds from the regulations enacted by the State Department as they cover secondary exchange students studying on J-1 visas. We have excerpted the relevant State Department regulations below; the full version can be located at the State Department home page:

[www.efcr.gov](http://www.efcr.gov)

### Summary

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The Exchange Visitor Program is carried out pursuant to the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. Its purpose is to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges.

Sponsors and exchange visitors are required to comply with the Exchange Visitor Program regulations. It is essential that they become familiar with these regulations.

#### **Student, Secondary (High School)**

Through the high school exchange program, foreign secondary school students enter the United States to complete up to one year of academic study at an accredited public or private secondary school. During their stay, participants live with American host families or reside at accredited U.S. boarding schools. Students attend school as full time students and may attend for not less than one academic semester (or its quarter equivalent) or more than a full academic year.

Eligible participants are between the age of 15 and 18-and-a-half years at the time of initial school enrollment (by the first day of school), or have not completed more than 11 years of primary and secondary school (excluding kindergarten). Students who have previously participated in an exchange program [semester-long or year-long] are ineligible for participation in the high school program.

Prior to the students leaving their home country, program sponsors are required to provide them with all travel arrangements and a profile of the school, host family and community in which they have been placed. Students and their parents should be made aware whether their host family is considered an arrival (temporary) family or a permanent family for the school year. Students may take part in school sanctioned extracurricular activities, including athletics, if the school district and the state authority responsible for determining athletic eligibility approve their participation. Students may not be employed on a part- or full-time basis, but may accept occasional work such as yard work or baby-sitting.

Sponsoring organizations may not under any circumstance facilitate the entry of any foreign student into the United States without a school placement. They must obtain written notice of a participant's acceptance by the school from the principal or other authorized school administrator. Sponsors may not enroll more than five students in one school unless so requested in writing by the school.

Sponsoring organizations are required to screen all potential host families with whom participating students are placed. Sponsors ensure that the family can provide a comfortable and nurturing home environment, and has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations. Under no circumstances will a sponsor facilitate the entry of any student for whom a host family placement has not been secured. A second student may be placed with a host family only with the prior written approval of the Department of State.

Please refer to the program regulations for details on the screening and selection of the students, host families, and the sponsor's administrative obligations and procedures.

## **Exchange Visitor Program** **22 CFR 62** **Section 62.25 • Secondary Students**

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- (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 com-

prehensive 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 area representative, 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 repre-

sentatives 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.



## 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. Using the State Department regulations as a point of departure, CSIET further strengthens the standards to which leading exchange organizations comply. 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 provide 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. CSJET 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 CSJET 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 stu-

dent, 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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# Notes

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ASSIST is a nonprofit organization with tax exempt status and is incorporated in the state of Vermont. ASSIST is designated by the United States State Department as an authorized Exchange Visitor Program. 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.

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