

Information and Orientation for Host Families



Today's Scholars. Tomorrow's Leaders.

2010/11 Academic Year

Mission Statement

To promote mutual understanding, cultural interchange and a more peaceful world, ASSIST provides opportunities for outstanding international students to attend the finest American independent secondary schools on one-year scholarships, and for students and teachers from these schools to engage in educational experiences abroad.

Introduction

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. Whether you will host during occasional visits (boarding schools) or for extended periods of time (day schools), 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 the years 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.

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What Can You Expect as Hosts?

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

We suggest 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. In general, our informality sometimes causes international visitors to feel that Americans are "cold" and are not very enthusiastic about meeting them. 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 it 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 some-

times 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

Try to learn something in advance about your student's country and culture. It might be helpful for you to visit a library to find materials about the country from which your student comes. The Internet, of course, is now a rich resource for this type of information. 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 inter-

national 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, 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

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.

As well, each student has limited liability coverage as part of his or her policy of health and accident insurance. We encourage families to read the policy to see what coverage is available to the student that could also be of benefit to the family.

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 most likely covered by CMI insurance, a ten or eleven-month travel insurance program offered through ASSIST. CMI offers a comprehensive health insurance plan that will cover your student in the event of illness or injury. CMI is a member of Beech Street PPO, which offers reduced costs to your student. A list of local member providers can be found via phone at 1-800-432-1776 or by visiting their website at www.beechstreet.com.

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 now. 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 estab-

lish 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.

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 have hosted your ASSIST student. At the time of publication, a revision authorizing a greater tax allowance was under consideration. However, 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 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 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.

Support and ASSISTance

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, 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!

ASSIST Rules & Regulations

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

Each student will participate in the ASSIST Orientation program, which begins upon their arrival in the United States on August 21st, 2010. 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, 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 August 25th, 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

In the last analysis, 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.

State Department Regulations

ASSIST is designated by the United States Department of State as an authorized 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 business model builds from the regulations enacted by the State Department as they cover secondary exchange students studying on J-1 visas. We have excerpted two items below: first, the introduction found on the State Department web site which summarizes the key regulations, and second, the State Department regulations that affect your work at an ASSIST member school.

Summary

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. This home page and the pages it links to should be viewed as a resource; they are not intended as a replacement or substitution for the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, 22 CFR Part 62.

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.

Part 62

Exchange Visitor Program

Sec. 62.25 Secondary school students.

(a) **Introduction.** This section governs Department of State designated exchange visitor programs under which foreign national secondary school students are afforded the opportunity for up to one year of study in a

United States accredited public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family or residing at an accredited U.S. boarding school.

(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 terms are defined in Sec. 62.2.

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

- (1) Require all participants to be enrolled and participating in a full course of study at an accredited educational institution;
- (2) Allow entry of participants for not less than one academic semester (or quarter equivalency) nor more than two academic semesters (or quarter equivalency) duration; and
- (3) Be 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 in the second semester of a U.S. academic year if specifically permitted to do so, in writing, by the school in which the exchange visitor is enrolled. Both the host family and school must be notified prior to the exchange student's arrival in the United States that the placement is for either an academic semester or year, or calendar year program.

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

- (1) Are adequately trained and supervised and that any such person in direct personal contact with exchange students has been vetted through a criminal background check ;
- (2) Make no student placement beyond 120 miles of the home of a local organizational representative authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from an exchange student's participation in the exchange visitor program;
- (3) Ensure that no organizational representative act as both host family and area supervisor for any exchange student participant;

- (4) Maintain, at minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the student and host family, and ensure that the school has contact information for the local organizational representative and the program sponsor's main office; and
 - (5) Adhere to all regulatory provisions set forth in this Part and all additional terms and conditions governing program administration that the Department may from time to time impose.
- (e) **Student selection.** In addition to satisfying the requirements of Sec. 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 country who have not completed more than eleven 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 participant 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 participant 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) Sponsors must maintain copies of all written acceptances and make such documents available for Department of State inspection upon request.
 - (4) 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.

- (5) 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.
 - (6) Upon issuance of Form DS-2019 to a prospective participant, the sponsor accepts full responsibility for placing the student, except in cases of voluntary student withdraw or visa denial.
- (g) **Student orientation.** In addition to the orientation requirements set forth at Sec. 62.10, all sponsors must provide exchange students, prior to their departure from the home country, 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) Age and language appropriate information on how to identify and report sexual abuse or exploitation;
 - (3) A detailed profile of the host family in which the exchange student is placed. The profile must state whether the host family is either a permanent placement or a temporary arrival family;
 - (4) A detailed profile of the school and community in which the exchange student is placed; and
 - (5) An identification card, which lists the exchange student's name, United States host family placement address and telephone number, and a telephone number which affords immediate contact with both the program sponsor, the program sponsor's organizational representative, and Department of State in case of emergency. Such cards may be provided in advance of home country departure or immediately upon entry into the United States.
- (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.
- (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 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 the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations;
 - (2) Utilize a standard application form that must be signed and dated by all potential host family applicants which provides a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment, family composition, and community environment. Exchange students are not permitted to reside with relatives.
 - (3) Conduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home;
 - (4) Ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment;
 - (5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references for each host family from the school or community, attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;
 - (6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations;
 - (7) Verify that each member of the host family household eighteen years of age and older has undergone a criminal background check; and
 - (8) Maintain a record of all documentation, including but not limited to application forms, background checks, evaluations, and interviews, for all selected host families for a period of three years.
- (k) **Host family orientation.** In addition to the orientation requirements set forth in Sec. 62.10, sponsors must:
- (1) Inform all host families of the philosophy, rules, and regulations governing the sponsor's exchange visitor program;

- (2) Provide all selected host families with a copy of Department of State-promulgated Exchange Visitor Program regulations; and
 - (3) Advise all selected host families of strategies for cross-cultural interaction and conduct workshops which will familiarize the host family with cultural differences and practices.
- (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 for 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 Department of State. Under no circumstance may more than two exchange students may be placed with one host family.
- (2) 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 temporary placement, and facilitate and encourage the exchange of correspondence between the two prior to the student's departure from the home country.
 - (3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances which 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) **Reporting requirements.** Along with the annual report required by regulations set forth at Sec. 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 abuse of an exchange student participant. 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 summary suspension and termination of the sponsor's Exchange Visitor Program designation.

- (2) A summation of all situations which resulted in the placement of exchange student participants with more than one host family or school placement; and
- (3) Provide 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 provide at a minimum, the exchange visitor student's full name, Form DS-2019 number (SEVIS ID), host family placement (current U.S. address), and school (site of activity) address.

§ 62.40 Termination of program participation.

- (a) A sponsor shall terminate an exchange visitor's participation in its program when the exchange visitor:
 - (1) Fails to pursue the activities for which he or she was admitted to the United States;
 - (2) Is unable to continue, unless otherwise exempted pursuant to these regulations;
 - (3) Violates the Exchange Visitor Program regulations and/or the sponsor's rules governing the program, if, in the sponsor's opinion, termination is warranted;
 - (4) Willfully fails to maintain the insurance coverage required under § 62.14 of these regulations; or § 62.42
- (b) An exchange visitor's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program is subject to termination when he or she engages in unauthorized employment. Upon establishing such violation, the Department of State shall terminate the exchange visitor's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program.

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.

Robert A. Stanley, Jr.
President

J. Martin Milne
Vice President for
School and Family Relations

Eleanore Boyse
Director of
Alumni Relations

Meg Moulton
Vice President for
Advancement

American Secondary Schools
for
International Students and Teachers

P. O. Box 969
Suite 217, Suffield Village
68 Bridge Street
Suffield, Connecticut 06078 USA

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



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