



Christian Academy[®]
SCHOOL SYSTEM

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDEBOOK

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The Christian Academy School System welcomes you and your family to our school community. The mission of Christian Academy is *“To develop students with a heart for God who grow as Jesus did in wisdom, stature and in favor with God and men.” Luke 2:52*

We look forward to your time here with us and hope it will be worthwhile and you will create lifelong memories of your years at Christian Academy. To assist you in preparing for your stay and in understanding what will be expected of you as a Christian Academy student, we offer the following GUIDELINES.

GUIDING RULES

Parents who are investing in an international education for their children expect that they will behave well and will act in a manner that reflects well on their family and country. It is important that you remember this expectation and honor your parents in doing the very best you can.

You must carefully read these Guidelines and the Christian Academy Family and Student Handbook. They set forth the code of conduct, disciplinary rules, and obligations of a Christian Academy student. You should know that some violations may result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. To the extent that any of the Guidelines conflict with any policy in the Handbook, you should comply with the Guidelines. If you or your parents have any questions about any Guideline or Handbook policy, you should speak to a school administrator.

You should also follow the Uniform and Dress Code policies. You should seek guidance from your host parents for appropriate attire. You may be required to purchase at your own cost new clothes that are appropriate for school.

ARRIVAL

As you come to the United States, keep these points in mind:

1. Many things will be different during your stay in North America
2. Relax and enjoy the differences
3. Be open about sharing your feelings. They are probably not unusual so you do not have to feel ashamed of them.
4. Seek new experiences! You will make the most of your time by embracing your new culture and host family. Be willing to try new things, especially food, and go to new places.
5. Keep a strong sense of your own values and culture.

Upon arrival, you will probably be tired from jet lag and you may be homesick. Hopefully, you will also be excited and eager to begin your new life. Your host family and Christian Academy may have a lot planned for you. Expect some irregular sleep patterns during this time and take care of yourself to help make a good adjustment. You should let your family know you have arrived safely.

AMERICAN CUSTOMS

Americans have a number of customs that may seem different to you. Here are several:

- Dinner is usually at a scheduled time (6:00 p.m. for example) and is not eaten whenever you get home from school or work.
- Don't routinely close the door to your room. Doors tend to be left open unless a person wants privacy. A closed door, therefore, signals that you don't want any interruptions. When a door is closed and you want to talk to someone inside, politely knock on the door and wait for them to answer and let you in.
- You are expected to be on time to appointments and classes. Attendance is mandatory.
- It is not considered impolite to show your teeth while laughing or smiling.
- Crossing the street in the middle of the street and not at a crosswalk is called "jaywalking" and is illegal and dangerous. So is crossing when the light is red even though you will see Americans do these things. Don't adopt these practices.
- We keep to the right when walking on the sidewalk, in halls, on stairs or on escalators.
- We tend to keep our homes at cooler temperatures so be prepared to wear warmer clothes to be more comfortable.
- It is common to use tissues or a handkerchief in public rather than sniffing. It is also polite to cover your mouth when you sneeze or yawn with the fold in your arm.
- Striking someone you have an argument with is not acceptable and is illegal. Students who hit other students may be expelled from school.
- Americans value resources and don't like waste. We recycle and reuse whenever possible. This applies to many things. We recycle our trash by separating paper, glass and plastic when we throw it away. This applies to food too. It is considered a good thing to eat leftovers from a meal. If you pour a drink or open a bag of chips/food, you should try to finish it or put it in a container and store it appropriately to finish later. Do your best not to take more than you can consume at one time. This also applies to utilities. Turn off lights and computers when not in use. Do not leave windows open if there is no screen or it is cold outside.
- Tipping or giving gratuity to those that provide a service such as a waiter, hairdresser/barber, taxi driver is common and expected.
- It is illegal to urinate in public.

POLITENESS

- It is important to show the same respect to your host parents that you would show to your own parents.
- It is considered polite to say "Good morning" when you see people in the morning. In the evening tell your host family "Good night". When you are going to your room, don't just get up and leave. In addition, it is polite to say hello to whoever is home when you enter the house.
- When you enter a house, you should remove your shoes.
- People shake hands when meeting an adult for the first time. They do not bow.
- If people already know each other, they will generally just say "Hi" the next time they meet. If they are particularly close and have not seen one another in awhile, they may shake hands or hug depending on how close they are and their personality.

- When addressing an adult, always use the appropriate title (Mr., Mrs. or Miss with their last name) unless they have specifically asked you to call them by their first name.
- Leaving others in routine situations is simple. A person may say, “bye” or “see you later”. Sometimes they may say something like “talk to you soon” or “I will talk to you later” but they do not necessarily mean this literally. You should not feel insulted or hurt if they don’t call in the next few hours or days.
- If you bump into someone accidentally, say “sorry” or “excuse me”.
- Try not to block other’s views when at sporting events, concerts, movies, etc.
- Hold doors for other people that are following you in or out of them.
- We wait in lines and do not push ahead.
- If you see someone struggling to carry something, offer to help them carry it if you can.
- In some cultures, people show appreciation for food by making a lot of noises. In America, however, making loud noises while eating is considered rude. Americans try to eat with their mouths closed and without smacking or slurping and without banging utensils on dishes.
- If you are preparing a snack or something for yourself, ask others if they would like some too.
- When you are a guest somewhere, it is common to be asked what you would like to drink. Sometimes the host will indicate what is available but if not, kindly ask, “Do you have ____?”
- Clerks, waiters, taxi drivers, secretaries and all service personnel should be treated courteously.

COMMUNICATION

Americans are usually quite direct. They use very little flattery and prize honesty. They get to the point quickly. They don’t look to other people to solve their problems but generally try to work them out themselves.

- Generally, people stand two to three feet apart from each other when talking. They may use many physical gestures.
- Americans maintain eye contact when speaking but the contact should not be too intense. The pattern is to establish eye contact and then periodically look aside before returning contact.
- In public places, you may have to adjust your voice level, speaking either quieter or louder. Take your cue from the tones of other people around you.
- You will find most Americans uncomfortable with silence. They will try to fill the gap by saying something or asking a question.
- In America, smiling and giggling usually convey happiness and amusement not confusion or embarrassment. Since you are learning a new language and may not understand some things giggling may convey the wrong signal. The best approach is to say you are having trouble understanding.
- People often talk to one another without being formally introduced.

HOST FAMILY LIFE

Host Family assignments are made for one year at a time. You may share preferences after your first year but they are not guaranteed.

You are expected to become an integral part of your host family. Participate! You will be asked to assume duties and responsibilities in your host family household. Such duties and responsibilities may include but are not limited to: household chores, cooking, washing dishes, laundry, cleaning, and yard work. You should help as much as you can. For example, when the groceries are brought home from the market, assist in taking them inside the house. It is nice to volunteer for something that needs to be done. Look for opportunities!

You must follow the host family's rules and customs regarding curfew, chores and internet use.

Your host family will expect you to act mature, responsible and respectful. Be considerate. Ask permission. Let them know of your plans in advance or they may not be able to accommodate you.

Treat all children in your host family respectfully and kindly. You may find it valuable to read to younger siblings as a way of practicing your English. If smaller children are bothering you, you may politely mention this to your host family so boundaries can be set such as knocking or nicely letting them know you need time to study. You should respect older sibling's privacy.

Take note of any special events in the host family such as birthdays or holidays and celebrate with them! Your host family will enjoy hearing about your family back home and your special events and family activities and celebrations. They will appreciate any ways you might share your culture.

It is important that you not expect everything to be wonderful when you first meet your host family. This can be an awkward period with everyone feeling a little bit anxious. Allow adjustment time. If you are feeling homesick, try to concentrate on what you like or can be thankful for about this new situation. Personalize your room with pictures and mementos. It will take time but it helps if you make the decision to integrate fully into the family's routines rather than keeping to yourself.

Your host family will have their own family guidelines beyond these and will give you a copy when you arrive. Your family guidelines will explain how things work in your home. Some things that may be covered are dinner time, bed time, study time, quiet time, how laundry is handled, curfew, chores, how to use appliances, dress code, and what to do in an emergency as well as others.

Learn what to do in an emergency. Keep important numbers with you such as phone numbers for your host family and your address. Familiarize yourself with your surroundings and routes to places you frequently go like school. If a stranger approaches you, you do not need to talk to them and if you feel in danger or uncomfortable, leave immediately and head to a place where there are other people and call your host family. Keep a charged cell phone with you when you are out alone.

Do not compare host family homes with your friends. Each family is special in their own way. You are not allowed to discuss matters related to any of your family members without their prior approval. Along with this, you are also not allowed to post pictures or videos of any member of your host family or your home without their prior approval. Similarly, your host family is expected to provide the same level of privacy to you with regard to social media. They will ask your permission before posting pictures or comments about you.

RIGHTS

- You have the right to expect decent food and a clean room with a bed, a closet, a window, internet access (within the family guidelines), and a place to study with adequate lighting. You may share your room and bathroom with other members of your household.
- You have the right to privacy. Others should not enter your room when the door is closed. They should knock first and await your permission before entering.
- You have NO right to smoke, drink alcohol or play loud music.
- If something seems uncomfortable, talk it over with your host family or the International Program Director.
- You have the right to reasonable laundry facilities. This is usually about two loads done once a week or within your family's guidelines. You should wash your clothes weekly.
- Your host family should prepare dinner at least three nights of the week for you. They may also ask you what types of food you like so they can have these things available to you at home.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- You should be easy to get along with.
- Members of the host family are not your servants. You are responsible to keep your own room clean. You are also responsible to clean the areas you use, particularly the kitchen (wash and put away dishes you use, wipe the table or counter off), study area, and bathroom. Do not leave clothes or other personal belongings all over the house.
- Never take food or drink into your bedroom without permission.
- You should let your host family know where you are at all times, asking permission beforehand if you have plans to go someplace.
- Treat your host family's property with respect. You could be held responsible for damages.
- You should follow the family's schedule. For example, don't expect to watch television at 2 am or to do laundry or prepare meals whenever you want.
- Ask permission in advance to bring a friend home.
- You should respect the family's privacy.
- You should not use the family's electronic equipment without permission.
- You are required to attend religious services with your host family.
- Look for opportunities to learn more about American culture and improve your English skills.
- Abide by your host family's guidelines.
- Host family assignments are made for the entire school year. Every effort should be made to resolve any problems with your host family.

EXPECTATIONS

The following are some of the things expected of each student:

1. **Be Independent.** Clean up after yourself, show initiative, and ask your host family if you have any questions.
2. **Be Direct.** Talk about any problems you may be experiencing that your host family can help you with and do not worry about making mistakes using English.

3. **Be Friendly.** Participate in family activities on a regular basis. Do not always go to your room and close the door or spend excessive amounts of time playing video games with your friends or watching your dramas instead of interacting with your host family. Initiate conversations with your host family and be willing to share your experiences with them.
4. **Show Respect.** Abide by common courtesies such as asking how late and how loudly you can listen to music or watch TV, etc. Be sure to respect the family's need for quiet periods.
5. **Be Polite.** Use good etiquette such as saying "please" when making a request and "thank you" after someone has helped you. In English, it is polite to use the phrase, "would like". For example, it is more polite to say, "I would like to _____" than "I want _____". It is always better to ask permission to do something than assume you are allowed to do it.
6. **Respect House Rules.** Always obey house rules. Your host family will go over these when you first move in. You should keep a copy of the rules and refer to them often. If you are unsure of any of the rules or if there is a problem, talk with your host parents.
7. **Get Involved.** You need to make an effort to get involved in the Christian Academy community and the local community. This can be done by attending and participating in school, church, or community events. You should not spend all of your time with other international students and should seek guidance from your host parents and school personnel when choosing friends.
8. **Learn About Christianity.** You are expected to learn about the Christian faith, respect the Christian faith of those around you, and adhere to the guidelines for Christian living as stated in the Christian Academy Handbook.

CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION

In life, we can always expect conflicts because we are not all the same. We all have conflicts in our regular families. So it is likely that you and your host family will also have conflicts at some point. It is not disgraceful to have a conflict. It is important to be open about the conflict if it is serious and persists. The key to avoiding conflicts and ending them is **COMMUNICATION**. You must talk about the conflict. That is hard when the conflict is with your host family because you may feel like a guest in their house and your English skills are not equal to theirs. You should, however, try to resolve the conflict within the family. If you feel you cannot resolve it, talk to the International Program Coordinator.

Often, you will find conflicts result from misunderstandings. For example, you may feel your host family doesn't spend enough time with you. Maybe they said something that hurt your feelings. You may be surprised by how much meat they eat and want more rice and vegetables. They cannot try to correct the problem if you do not communicate your concerns. If you raise problems or concerns, they will try to help you but they are not mind readers ~ communicate your concerns!

If there is a problem with your host family, you must seek to resolve the problem first through direct discussion with your host family. If you and your host family are unable to resolve the problem, you and your host family may seek assistance from the International Program Coordinator. To protect the privacy of all parties involved, you should refrain from discussing problems of a personal nature with others except your host family, the International Program Coordinator, and/or your parents. If you are experiencing any sort of relational stress, difficulty, abuse or harassment of any kind, you must immediately report it to the International Program Coordinator. However, even if you are experiencing hardship, you are not allowed to change host families or sleep over at your friend's house without prior approval from the International Program Coordinator. ONLY the International Program Coordinator can

reassign you to another host family. Depending on the nature of the problem, there may be additional fees to move to a new home. EVERYTHING to correct the situation needs to be done before this will be considered as an option and will only be done in extreme circumstances.

BATHROOM

- It is customary to leave the bathroom door open when nobody is inside. When using the bathroom, close and lock the door. When you are finished using the bathroom, it is polite to leave the toilet seat down.
- A DAILY SHOWER IS COMMON, Daily facial shaving is expected for men. Most American women also shave their legs and under their arms. Because body odor is not acceptable in American culture, people use DEODERANT. They brush and floss their teeth every morning and evening and sometimes after meals. Some people use mouthwash to help with bad breath.
- BATHROOM FLOORS DO NOT HAVE DRAINS. KEEP WATER IN THE SINK AND IN THE BATHTUB ONLY. Place the shower curtain inside the bathtub when showering. DRY OFF INSIDE THE TUB/SHOWER BEFORE GETTING OUT. Dry the bathroom after use. Do NOT leave standing water.
- Generally, a shower should not last longer than 10 minutes. Late night showers, although common in some other countries, should be avoided because it is considered rude to awaken someone with the noise late at night. Americans usually only take one shower at night OR in the morning. Sometimes twice if they have been very active.
- In America, bath water is not shared. Empty the tub when finished.
- Remove all loose hair from the bottom of the sink or the tub before leaving the bathroom so as not to clog the drain. Put it in the wastebasket/trash. Do not remove the drain stoppers.
- Every person in the family home shares the duty of cleaning up. When you use the bathroom, make sure that you clean up after yourself. Wipe up water after spills, hang towels, and wash out the sink and shower/tub.
- Clothing should not give off unpleasant smells. Change your clothes daily, especially your under garments/underwear and when they may smell from sweating. Wash the clothes you wear each week. In America, we wash everything in the clothes washer including personal garments such as underwear and socks. These items should NOT be hand washed and hung to dry in your room or closet but rather washed in the clothes washer and if hang drying is necessary, ask where this is allowed.
- In America, use toilet tissue to clean after using the toilet. The tissue is thrown in the toilet and flushed. Do not put used, soiled tissue in the trash/wastebasket. Flush it down the toilet. Body waste and toilet tissue are the ONLY things that should be flushed down the toilet.
- Women use either tampons or sanitary napkins/pads for menstruation. Wrap these in toilet tissue and throw them in the trash/wastebasket after use. Do NOT flush them down the toilet. This may damage the plumbing and you could be held responsible for any repairs.
- Basic hygiene products will be supplied by your host family. Special needs or wants will be your responsibility.
- Notify your host family immediately if there are any water problems (leaks, overflowing toilets,...) in the bathroom.

BEDROOM

- People in America go to their own bedrooms when they are tired, when they have work to do, or when they want to be alone. You may go to your own room when you need or want to also but make an effort to spend time with your family too.
- Your host family is required to provide a separate bed for you, storage space for your personal items (within reason), and access to a bathroom. If a separate bedroom is unavailable, you may share a room with a host sibling of the same gender and similar age or another international student of the same gender. Your bed cannot be placed in an open area such as a family room or furnished basement unless special permission has been given by the International Program Director. Additionally, you will be provided with adequate storage for clothing and a study area consisting of a desk or table, chair and adequate lighting to read by. This study area may be in a public place such as the dining or living room.
- Boys and girls cannot be in a room alone together especially with a closed door.
- Reminder: no food or beverages in your room and you should care for your space by cleaning up and not causing damage. Water damages wood. Do NOT place wet towels and clothing on furniture or leave on the floor. Hang them to dry or dry them in the clothes dryer.

KITCHEN AND MEALS

Most host families provide breakfast and dinner. During the school/work week, breakfast is informal since everyone is trying to get ready and leave quickly. This, as well as the food choices, may be very different from what you are used to. Some examples of “quick” breakfast are cereal, oatmeal, breakfast bars, a piece of fruit, yogurt, toast/muffin, frozen waffles and coffee, tea, milk or juice. Bigger breakfasts are usually saved for weekends.

Funds in the amount of \$300 will be deposited into your lunch account each semester. Anything spent beyond this amount will be your responsibility. You may bring packed lunches from home. Discuss this with your host family to develop a plan that works. Microwaves are available. You can deposit funds into your account by giving it directly to the cashier in the cafeteria or putting it in the box with your name and account number located in your school office. You can sign up for an account with MEALPAYPLUS.COM free of charge to keep track of your cafeteria account. If you choose to make payments through this service there is a fee.

Dinner will be more like what you may be accustomed to, in the sense that everyone tries to eat dinner together and a parent usually cooks. It may be earlier or later than you are used to and may be more rushed depending on family member activities. You should be home for dinner and join the family at the table. If you are home later, you may need to reheat dinner or make something on your own.

You are entitled to eat reasonable amounts of food but remember that you are sharing the available food with everyone else. Once everyone has been served, you may ask for more food if you are still hungry and there is more food available. It is not considered rude to ask for more AFTER everyone has been served.

Food is generally passed around a table. Do not reach over someone to grab food or salt/pepper. Politely ask the other to hand it to you. Say, "Please pass the _____" or "May I have some _____?" If it is the last portion, ask "Does anyone else want any _____?"

Foods may be very different from what you have at home and it may be difficult at first but remember trying new foods is part of the experience. Be open-minded and adventurous. Adjust little by little and be sure to let your host family know if there is something you really like so they can try to accommodate your preferences. If you like a certain food or beverage that the family doesn't use, you may request it or buy it yourself.

It is okay to ask your host parents to take you to a local market that sells your home country's food occasionally. You may also volunteer to cook a meal for your family. Do not cook for yourself regularly. That will insult your host family and you could be in their way when they need to use the kitchen especially at key times.

You can ask your host family to give you a space in the refrigerator and pantry to store your own food items. Your host family will likely also have snacks and things available to everyone in the family. You will also be able to take these but in reasonable amounts. If something is marked, that is not for anyone to take.

You should ask for assistance initially in preparing foods for yourself. Make healthy choices so you will do well in school. Poor food choices can negatively affect your ability to concentrate.

Ask your host family how to use all KITCHEN APPLIANCES! Some kitchen appliances or utensils can be dangerous, especially if they are new to you. Some homes have garbage disposals underneath the sink- Do NOT put your hand down the drain. Hot pots/pans should only be handled with an oven mitt and should NOT be placed on the counter/table after being on the stove. This could cause damage and you may be held responsible for these damages.

EATING OUT- There are a wide variety of food choices in America: fast food, family restaurants, coffee shops, cafeterias and elegant restaurants. These vary in price and in the amount of time you are expected to take for a meal. Families vary in how often they eat out.

COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

Your host family would like to communicate with your parents back home whenever possible. Perhaps, a social media option will allow them to share pictures with them? Help to find the best way possible to connect to your parents so they can keep up with your life here. You can skype or otherwise communicate with your parents and you should do this regularly. Although this may be more often in the beginning, it should not be necessary to communicate every day after the first couple weeks. After that, once a week should be enough. This will help your adjustment. Coordinate this with your host family's schedule and it must occur prior to curfew/bed time and so it doesn't interrupt your host family's plans.

FINANCES

You should have sufficient financial support to ensure your well-being during the entire program. You should have a credit ATM VISA card (that is capable of withdrawing cash from an ATM in the United States) in your name with at least a reasonable credit limit to cover expenses throughout the year. It is not a simple process to set up a bank account for a minor in the United States and may not be possible. Therefore, the ATM VISA card is the best option. If and when possible, a host family can help set up a bank account but again this is not always possible.

Typically, your host family will pay for routine expenses such as food and basic toiletries. However, you are responsible to pay for other expenses such as your cell phone bill, shopping, social events, specially requested toiletries and food, physical exams/vaccinations, eye/dental exams, calculators, personal entertainment, clothing, travel and other optional expenses.

Do not keep large sums of money around the house and do not carry a lot of cash with you. Be careful with American bills; they are all the same size and color and it is easy to get them confused. Coins are legal tender in the U.S. and can be used to purchase items.

You are not allowed to loan or borrow money from your host family or other students. You should never allow someone else to use your credit card or lunch account. If you are having trouble with money, it is best to talk to the International Program Director.

ELECTRONICS

You must follow your host family guidelines for computer, internet and cell phone usage. They may limit your usage if they feel it is interfering with your academic progress or hindering your social connection with your family. Usage is expected to be limited and should be used in public areas. You may be granted an exception if you need privacy to call/skype home.

Do not stream movies and videos from your home country or download files on the family computer. Families will be encouraged to have internet filtering software and may need your passwords to install this software. You may need to change your settings to English for monitoring. Your host family has the right to check your devices if necessary. Be prepared that you may not be able to use your cell phone or other devices as your alarm clock.

A cell phone is discouraged for middle school students but is strongly encouraged for high school students. This should be a cell phone that can be reached by dialing a US domestic phone number and you should keep it charged. You must follow school rules regarding cell phone usage during the school day and have it with you after school and when you are away from your home so you can be reached by your host family. You can buy a prepaid phone and be responsible to add minutes each month for continuous service or purchase a plan through a service provider.

You are strictly prohibited from viewing a website with pornography, extreme violence, profanity and/or any other inappropriate content. Depending on the severity of any misconduct, you may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion from Christian Academy. You are

required to read, agree and sign a more detailed Technology Usage Agreement pertaining to use of technology at school and these same guidelines will apply at home.

TRANSPORTATION

You will rely on your host family for transportation. They will provide you with rides to and from school and will arrange or provide transportation to and from church and extracurricular activities such as sports, band, retreats and other school functions. Older siblings with a license may provide rides. Some families use the bus service for school. If you will be riding the bus, you will receive a pass and the procedure will be explained to you. You should discuss ride needs with your host family well in advance (sooner is always better), and their flexibility in providing rides will be in the context of their overall family needs. Uber or similar services can be used by students 18 years or older. You are not allowed to accept a ride not approved by your host family in advance.

Be sure to talk to your host family about areas that are safe for walking around and bike riding. You should become familiar with the area and traffic laws and signals. You will need to abide by curfew if you are out walking or bike riding and should ask permission before leaving.

Acquiring a driver's license while you are a student at Christian Academy is not allowed due to liability concerns for everyone involved. Your insurance here does not cover you operating any type of motor vehicle, including a golf cart and four-wheeler or any other type of recreational vehicle. You may not operate a motor vehicle even in your driveway or backyard.

SCHOOL AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

You will attend school regularly. You are enrolled as a full-time student and attendance is mandatory. You must make a concerted effort to make satisfactory academic progress and be involved in some extracurricular activity(ies). If your grades are low, your extracurricular activities may be limited. See the Handbook for more information regarding academic expectations and consequences.

Do not share your grades and online passwords with other students. This is personal and private information. You are not in competition but rather should be striving to do your very best.

Tutoring is available and will be coordinated for you as requested. There may be additional costs associated with tutoring and special academic support. Support is available!

Classrooms in America tend to be more informal than what you are used to. You will be expected to express your opinions at the invitation of the teacher. If you do not understand something, ask your teacher. You can do this during class usually by raising your hand, just before or after class. You may also meet with your teacher during his/her "office hours", before or after school. You need to request this meeting and set it up with your teacher ahead of time unless they tell you otherwise. They will usually share their availability and contact information at the beginning of the year. If you don't ask questions, your teacher will assume you understand everything. You can also set up a meeting to talk to your counselor.

Teachers do not expect to negotiate grades with students. If you have a concern or problem with a grade, it is fair to ask your teacher about it. However, this should not be done regularly and may not result in a change of your grade.

You must also make a concerted effort to improve your English proficiency. To help accomplish this, you are strongly encouraged to interact with your peers by speaking English and you should refrain from spending too much time with other students speaking in your native language. At school and home the policy is “English Only” (except when you are communicating with your family/friends in your home country). You should not speak your native language when others who do not speak your language are present. This is inconsiderate and will alienate possible new friends. Improving your English proficiency will help you perform better in school and facilitate your adjustment to life in the US.

ATHLETICS

In Kentucky, Middle School students may participate in any school sanctioned sport. However, the State governing body (KHSAA) does not allow F1 Visa international students to participate in Varsity level sports their first year but you may participate for the rest of your high school years. In Indiana, currently all students may participate in athletics.

SHOPPING

Shopping may be confusing because there are so many stores that sell similar things. It is helpful to talk with your host family to find out where the best bargains and best quality can be found. It is not common to bargain in stores. The price of the good is considered set. Taxes will be added to your purchase at the cash register. Taxes vary by location and/or type of good. You should treat clerks as equals. It is okay to tell them if you are not interested in purchasing items. Keep in mind the amount of space you will need to bring or ship items home.

DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

You are not allowed to participate in any dangerous recreational activities from which a risk of serious physical injury can be reasonable discerned. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, snowboarding, ski jumping, hang gliding, zip lining, bungee jumping, use of firearms at a shooting range, and skydiving. If you participate in a forbidden activity, your parents, NOT your host family, must accept full responsibility for any consequences resulting from your participation in the activity.

Special arrangements have been made so you may participate in all class retreat activities.

You may participate with your host family in more common types of recreational activity only if your parents give your host family written consent and release liability of Christian Academy and your host family in writing. Such recreational activity includes hiking, cross country or downhill skiing, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking.

SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

You must comply with all laws of the United States including state laws and city ordinances as a condition of your student visa. Under no circumstances may you use, purchase or possess any tobacco products, drugs, or alcohol.

You may not use, possess, purchase, or own any type of fireworks or weapons, including but not limited to a knife, brass knuckles, slingshots, bow and arrows, throwing stars, switchblades, explosives or a firearm. A firearm includes any device that can shoot a bullet, pellet, flare, tranquilizer, spear dart, or other projectile, whether loaded or unloaded. This includes air guns, dart guns, pellet guns, BB guns, pistols, revolvers, rifles, and plastic firearms made with 3-D printers and copying technology as well as any ammunition for any such device. You may use a regular cooking knife to help prepare meals with prior approval from a supervising adult.

SCHOOL BREAKS

Students are required to make plans for the two week Christmas break. These plans can include returning home, participating in a group trip through an approved agency, or visiting family or friends. **These arrangements need to be confirmed by September 30th.** Travel over these two weeks is at your family's expense. If you will be visiting family or friends, your parents must submit written permission stating that they take full responsibility for the logistics and care of you while visiting the relative or close family friend. You must acknowledge in writing that you are required to behave in compliance with these Guidelines and Christian Academy's Handbook while staying with a relative or close friend. Staying with a relative or close family friend does not relieve your obligation to abide by all restrictions imposed by your student visa. If you are found to have violated these Guidelines or Christian Academy's Student Handbook while staying with a relative or close family friend you may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. All costs associated with your stay over the break are your responsibility.

Your parents are responsible for booking and purchasing all tickets to, from and within the United States for you. PRIOR to booking flights, dates and times should be cleared with the International Program Coordinator and/or your host family. Once flight tickets to the United States have been purchased, your parents must forward a copy of your itinerary to the International Program Coordinator immediately so transportation to or from the airport may be arranged in a mutually agreeable manner. You may not arrive more than a week prior to the start of school without permission from the International Program Coordinator. You should plan to return within 3 days of the last day of school. The International Program Coordinator should be made aware of any necessary changes to your flight plans immediately. Any changes of arrival and departure dates need to be approved by the International Program Coordinator in advance unless such changes are due to circumstances beyond control of you or your parents. If you arrive or depart earlier or later than the specified dates without prior approval, you may be charged a fee of \$100 per day.

Any requests for students to remain over break, arrive early or return at a later date will only be accepted if made by a host parent.

You may travel with your host family or Christian Academy personnel while you are here. You may not travel alone, aside from trips home, without prior approval from the International Program Coordinator. Prior approval will require that you have an adult that will be responsible for you during your travel. If independent travel is permitted, the cost would be your responsibility.

You should not book or purchase your flight tickets before you have received your acceptance letter or reenrollment confirmation and approval of the date and time.

You are required to go home every summer to reconnect with your family. Your I20 will be extended in May each school year if you have done well academically and are current on payments. Be sure to have your I20 signed each year. This travel is the financial responsibility of you and your family.

VISA

You must comply with all restrictions imposed on your student visa.

Under the terms and conditions of your student visa, you may not be employed while enrolled at Christian Academy except for certain on-campus work. If you are found to have engaged in unauthorized employment, you may be subject to return to your home country for violating the terms and conditions of your visa.

<https://www.ice.gov/sevis>

TERMINATION

Although Christian Academy hopes your enrollment will be mutually rewarding, we have the right to dismiss you or require your withdrawal when, in the exercise of Christian Academy's professional judgement, it deems it appropriate to do so as a result of conduct on your part which is contrary to the school's policies/instructions or to these Guidelines, conduct which is unsafe to self or others; academic performance which is inconsistent with the standards expected; or other acts or behavior Christian Academy deems unacceptable. In this case, all fees paid will be nonrefundable and your I20 will be cancelled.

OTHER

If you need unusual help for a matter not related to the academic requirements of Christian Academy, your family must request permission for the activity and provide necessary funds and compensation for the activity (specialized athletic participation, orthodontic work, etc.)

You are prohibited from engaging in conduct that may change your legal status or significantly alter your physical appearance while enrolled at Christian Academy. Such conduct includes but is not limited to getting married, becoming pregnant, causing a pregnancy, or cosmetic surgery.

Your parents have given Christian Academy the right to use your photograph for reproduction in any medium for the purposes of publication, advertising, display or editorial use. No personal information will be publicized.

QUESTIONS

We hope these Guidelines will help you to understand what is expected of you as a student at Christian Academy. Understand that no set of written guidelines can anticipate every situation that may occur and that Christian Academy reserves the right to take such actions as it deems necessary regarding any matter that arises while you are a student with us. Should you have any questions about these Guidelines or any other matter while a student at Christian Academy, you can speak with the International Program Coordinator.

GVCS STUDENT LOCAL SUPPORT

GVCS (Global Vision Christian School), our partner in South Korea, has representatives in the U.S. to assist with communication back home, paperwork and procedures as well as to support the students at Christian Academy.

CULSA STUDENT SUPPORT

CULSA has representatives in Beijing that are available through the CULSA program. These representatives visit the local campus throughout the year.

CASS ELL TEACHER

Mrs. Katherine Anderson – kanderson@caschools.us

CASS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Mrs. Teryl Bengel- tbengel@caschools.us

P: 440-477-4435

The following comes from materials provided by WANet, Wheaton Academy and the Host Family Guide from Western Christian High School. We are thankful for their experiences and willingness to share!

APPENDIX 1- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

From the day you arrive until the day you leave, you will encounter differences between Western culture and your own. Many of the major differences are linked to the following:

The Role of Women

In the last 30 years, the role of women has changed in North America. Women have assumed more of an equal role in society. Their work and family partners listen to them and make major decisions with them. Women are often found in leadership roles in businesses and organizations.

Although some of the traditional distinctions linger-men are still much less likely than women to do housework, for example-you will likely be surprised by the equality. This has changed family life dramatically. It is common for mothers to work outside the home and for fathers to spend time with their children after work. It is also common for parents to show affection for each other by holding hands, hugging and kissing. In many American families both the mother and father work outside the home. As a result, your host family may ask you to do more household tasks than in your country.

Individualism

North America is highly individualized. Groups are important- families, businesses, sports teams and student clubs- but people think and act in their own best interests. North Americans are trained from a young age to be independent and think critically. You will see this in the classroom, where students are expected to ask questions and have individual opinions. You will encounter this in the home, where parents offer choices to small children and may ask you for your opinion or input on issues more often than you are used to. The ability to make a decision will be useful now and throughout your life.

Informality

Americans are informal people most of the time. There are few formal gatherings.

Busyness

Family members are very busy. So it is very important to let others know when your schedules/needs change. American parents do not like surprises and will be more likely to accommodate your requests if you give them adequate notice, so plan ahead.

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

In America we celebrate many holidays including:

New Year's Day- January 1st- The start of the New Year is generally celebrated the evening before (New Year's Eve) with parties. On New Year's Eve (December 31st) it is common to celebrate the New Year by staying up late and counting down the clock until midnight. Some people like to also celebrate on New Year's Day with special meals or gatherings as well.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday- MLK Day- This is celebrated on the third Monday in January. This holiday honors Martin Luther King, Jr., the man who led the struggle for equality and civil rights on behalf of African-Americans in the 1960s.

Valentine's Day- February 14th- This is a day when people exchange cards, gifts, flowers and/or candy with people they are fond of. (we celebrate with balloons at school)

President's Day- This is celebrated on the third Monday in February and honors presidents of the U.S.

Good Friday/Easter- This religious holiday celebrates Jesus Christ's death on the cross to save the world from their sin and his resurrection from the dead. Easter Sunday occurs in March or April.

Memorial Day- This holiday is celebrated on the last Monday in May and honors the soldiers who died in all American wars. There are often parades, special services and family gatherings.

Independence Day- This is celebrated on the day America declared its independence, July 4th. It is also celebrated with parades, picnics, and fireworks.

Labor Day- On the first Monday in September, this holiday honors workers in the U.S.

Halloween- October 31st- Children dress up in costumes and go door to door collecting candy from neighbors. This practice is called "trick-or-treating". Some families prefer alternative plans such as Fall Festivals and don't recognize Halloween. People may carve pumpkins too.

Thanksgiving- This celebration of the harvest occurs in late November (typically the last Thursday of the month). Families gather and have a festive meal, usually with turkey and pumpkin pie. This is a time to share what you are thankful for with friends and family.

Christmas- December 25th- This holiday marks the birth of Jesus Christ and is a time for family gatherings and gift-giving.

Kentucky Derby- this is a historic and famous horse race at Churchill Downs on a Saturday in May. Many festival and community events take place throughout Louisville for the month leading up to Derby. People have parties or dress up with fancy clothes and big hats to go to the race. This is a special and unique event in Louisville!

MISCONCEPTIONS

Some misconceptions (things that are not true) include:

Misconception #1: In the U.S., everyone is glamorous and rich- just like in the Hollywood movies. This is true: You will probably be living an ordinary life with a family that is neither rich nor poor. They probably, for example, won't have a maid to look after your needs.

Misconception #2: American families are all white and headed by a mother and father. This is true: America is quite multicultural (from many ethnic backgrounds) and the nature of families is varied.

Misconception #3: Your host family will dote on you, with the mother devoting much of her day to making your life easier. This is true: family members will cherish their time with you, but they have their own lives to lead.

Misconception #4: Your host family house will be like a hotel. This is true: you may have your own room, but most likely you will be sharing all of the other facilities (and possibly the bedroom too).

Misconception #5: Meals will be like in a restaurant; you will have a large breakfast with convenient choices, several options for lunch and a full course dinner with soup and dessert. This is true: meals tend to be hurried and informal.

Misconception #6: You will be the only international student in the household. This is true: sometimes more than one student will be living with your host family. In some cases, they will be from another country.

Misconceptions #7: You will be able to speak English like a native after a short time in your host family. This is true: English is a very complex language and speaking it well takes considerable time. However, you will improve your English dramatically by staying with an English-speaking family.

APPENDIX 2- DEALING WITH CULTURAL SHOCK

All of the change associated from living in a new country- from food to conversational patterns- will likely result in what is called "culture shock". This is a common and natural time of disorientation and anxiety as your two cultures come together. This is common with travelers who move from one culture to another.

In fact, culture shock is part of a broader cycle of adaptation. It is worth looking in detail at that cycle, since it helps if you are prepared for the various stages and understand what is happening to you. It also helps to understand that you are not alone as almost EVERYBODY goes through the same process. You cannot prevent these stages from occurring, but you can reduce their impact.

Stage 1- ARRIVAL

First, it is important to pace yourself by taking naps, getting rest, and preparing yourself for short bursts of homesickness. Some students may have short-term health problems that include diarrhea or constipation; acne or pimples; and abnormal menstrual cycles for girls. For the most part, though, this beginning period is wonderful. Because everything is new, interesting and rewarding.

As you settle in, however, the differences may start to become annoying. Although this may be fun, everything is different. Things smell different, the water tastes different, and people dress differently.

Your support system from home is away, and you are struggling with a new language. It is difficult to express yourself clearly.

Stage 2- CULTURE SHOCK

This is the time when the cultural differences really sink in, and you see your own culture differently. Some students become obsessed with cleanliness or their health. Trouble sleeping can also occur when you are tempted to stay up late, and you may oversleep. It is quite common to be very tired. Some students may find themselves overeating or not eating enough. Also, when you are tired, your English skills will probably drop, just when you were expecting them to soar. You may want to run or hide. You will probably question the purpose or worth of the trip. How will you learn English?

Culture shock often occurs about one month into your stay and can last up to three months. It is important to recognize that it is not your fault. This happens to almost everyone. In some Host Family Survival Books, authors compare culture shock to motion sickness. You would not blame yourself for getting motion sickness on the flight to America. So do not blame yourself for getting culture shock on the way to a new culture.

Since you are missing your own culture, it is common to criticize the new culture and the new people. In general, this is a bad idea. It is best to not judge a new culture and to simply accept the differences.

How to Combat Culture Shock- Some things you can do to ease your adjustment:

- Remind yourself this is happening to others and homesickness is not permanent
- Remember this is not your fault. It results from being in an unfamiliar environment.
- You may feel others are learning English more easily. In fact, they are probably not. It is just as difficult for them. And remember, everyone going through homestay feels uncertainties. In the end, you will all learn English.
- Try to be very flexible and open-minded.
- Remember that you do not have to renounce your own culture to experience another one.
- Reconnect with your culture. A meal from your home country can soothe your spirits. Write a letter or call home, but don't get carried away and call continually. This will only slow your adjustment period.
- Make friends with other host family students and talk about these problems. Do not feel you have to be ashamed or hide what is happening. This is not a private matter. Everyone else is going through the same culture shock. It helps to talk and comfort each other.
- Talk to your host family or your counselor or the International Program Coordinator. They have probably seen it before and can help reassure you that better times will come.
- When everything seems overwhelming, take time out periods. Postpone communications and learning for a short time to do something you enjoy. Take long walks or get exercise. Listen to music. Eat well.
- Budget your money well during this period. Treat yourself, but don't spend money carelessly seeking comfort so that you run out of funds.

Stage 3- ADJUSTMENT PHASE

In time, without noticing it, you will finally settle in. You have learned new social skills to adapt. The culture clash will diminish. Homestay will become fully enjoyable. You will fit in.

Stage 4- HOLIDAYS

Everything should go smoothly until you are preparing to go home. Holidays can bring on a longing for family and friends. They can remind you of your outsider role in America and distance from your own culture. You may experience culture shock. That can erupt with any holiday that reminds you that you're not at home and this is a substitute family. You may find yourself traveling with your host family to visit relatives or receiving guests in their home. Everybody is overjoyed at seeing each other, yet you hardly know them. You don't share much history with them. You may feel left out. Again, try to be flexible. Join in and share their holiday. Perhaps you can take time to explain your own holidays and help them to share in your culture. This may be a time to cook a holiday meal from your home country. Communicate with them how you are feeling, even if it is homesickness or sadness.

Stage 5- PRE-DEPARTURE

The next problem period may come before departure, as you may again have mixed feelings. You will be sad at having to leave, yet delighted to be returning home. Do not avoid these feelings. They are natural and nothing to be ashamed of. Talk about them openly with people. Accept the feeling of loss.

It is important that you leave enough time to prepare properly for departure. You have many people to say goodbye to and must complete this task properly. Share your hopes and sense of loss with your host family.

You may want to give some people special gifts. These are the best when they are personal, reflecting you and your culture. If you are used to enjoying tea and coffee with your host mother, for example, buy a set of matching cups, one for her and one for you to take back. Prepare a photo album with pictures of some special events you shared. Write a letter or a poem that you can give to the family before you leave or that you can leave behind for them to discover later.

Above all, plan your farewell. Do not just let it happen.

Stage 6- RETURN AND RE-ADJUSTMENT

The return home can be the toughest stage, next to the initial culture shock itself. You will experience the joy of returning to your native soil, but in many ways you will feel somewhat like a stranger. You have grown. So much has happened to you. There is so much you want to tell your family and friends. However, they may not be particularly interested in listening. They want you to be the person you were before you left. They are more interested in their own lives than the changes you experienced.

You will also be mourning again, this time for the culture you briefly adopted and the friends you made. You probably can't share that with anybody back home.

You will have to return to old ways and you may miss some of the attitudes and experiences more common in American culture. Eventually, you will reconcile the two cultures and the changes in yourself. You will finally be at home.