

INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAM



HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

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WELCOMING YOUR STUDENT

As arrival day approaches, family excitement is bound to be high but try to keep expectations simple. Your student may feel apprehensive and nervous as they prepare to join your family. As with any new relationship, things take time. Your patience, flexibility, and honest communication will pave the way for a successful hosting experience and a lifelong international friendship.

Whether your student's bedroom is private or shared, create a warm, welcoming space. You might tape a paper welcome banner across the bedroom door. If you wish, prepare a welcome basket containing an index card with your family names, home address, important phone numbers (home, cell, work, emergency), and a few snacks. Encourage your student to display family photos and favorite posters or items that feel like home. Make sure you have hangers ready for clothing and ample storage space for other personal items.

The early days may be exhilarating and challenging for your student. Be patient as your student recovers from jet lag. The change in time zone, weather, food, and even water can leave your student exhausted. Language fatigue and shyness are common, even for a normally outgoing teenager. You may need to speak more slowly than normal as your student grows accustomed to listening and responding in English. This would **not** be the ideal time to throw a large welcome party. Be careful not to bombard your student with a flurry of activities and questions during this important adjustment time.

Make sure family members are available to help your student settle into the household. Your student will need a complete home tour, help operating simple appliances, instructions for using the telephone, and family housekeeping guidelines. Establish procedures for laundering clothes. If the student is responsible for his or her own laundry, provide explicit instructions on how to sort clothes, dispense detergent, and operate machinery. Written guidelines posted above the washing machine will enable your student to navigate independently.

Your student's appetite may be moderate until he or she grows accustomed to new food choices. Even if this isn't your student's first stay in the U.S., he or she may need time to adjust to the foods common in your region of the U.S. Though your own children are used to helping themselves, your student may need assistance in selecting and preparing even simple snacks. Invite your student to accompany you to the grocery store to help select familiar foods. This can be a fun, cultural adventure for a newcomer.

Your student may need to meet with the school guidance counselor to schedule classes and complete enrollment paperwork as soon as possible after arrival. Contact your student's school to find out if they would like the student to come in prior to the first day of school to schedule classes or take a tour.

Talk to your student about how he/she will receive funds from home. Many students will arrive with an international debit/credit card and will not need to open a bank account. However, if your student does not, please help your student establish a bank account to receive transfers from their natural parents if needed.

Introduce your student to important places and resources in your community. Encourage your student to become as independent as possible. Offer help in securing school bus passes, public bus schedules, and possibly even a bike and helmet! Map simple routes to the closest mall, library, drug store, and ATM machine. Provide your student with a house key and a local phone directory.

Treat your student as a member of the family, not as a guest. A few days after your student's arrival, outline household rules, including curfews. Assign your student a regular chore and thoroughly explain the procedures involved and the timeframe in which you expect this chore to be completed. Chores should be simple and easily comprehended. Frequent reminders may be needed to complete chores, as Asian mothers often do **all** household chores. Your student will need time to get used to this new responsibility. Remember to be patient while your student is adapting to our culture. The more accepting you are of who your student is as a person, the more quickly he/she will adapt and transition.

Remember to spend time just getting to know one another. As you develop a genuine appreciation for one another's ideas, values, and traditions, the bonds of friendship will deepen and a true exchange will unfold.

TIPS FOR HOSTING

In order to enjoy the benefits and rewards of hosting, we hope that the suggestions and advice that follow will help answer some of the questions you may have and, at the same time, help avoid possible cultural misunderstandings.

EXPECTATIONS

If your student has been to the U.S. before, the adaptation process may be short because the student has already experienced the American way of life. However, if your student is coming to the US for the first time, you should expect that it will take him/her a while to adjust. Don't forget that the student is used to speaking a different language, eating different foods, and living with different family rules and cultural expectations. Expect an adjustment period ranging from several days to several months, for both your student and your family, during which everyone will be learning about each other. Try to be patient with your student and with yourself.

Students sometimes base their image of life in the U.S. on the American movies and television shows they have seen. You will be able to help your student better understand daily life in America during the course of their program. You will notice that your student may have different ways of doing and seeing things. Learning not to judge your student's ideas and opinions hastily as "right" or "wrong" is taking a giant step toward international understanding. Consider your student's cultural point of view as different, but valid, and most likely he or she will do the same.

PATIENCE, A SENSE OF HUMOR, UNDERSTANDING, COMMUNICATION, and FLEXIBILITY are the keys to a successful hosting experience.

COMMUNICATION

When the student arrives he/she will most likely be very tired and speaking English can be exhausting. Avoid talking too much or too fast on the day of arrival. Help your student feel welcome through your comforting actions and understanding gestures.

- Plan to spend time with your student, especially during the first few days after arrival. Your student will depend on your family for information about everything in their new environment.
- If your student has notes, a map or something visual to look at while you're explaining plans or activities, it will help his/her understanding of what is going on and how to get around.
- People sometimes have a tendency to speak in a loud tone of voice when they think that someone doesn't understand what they are saying. Rather, it is important to use simple words, varying your sentences, and speaking more slowly to help them understand.
- Be patient with language difficulties. Studying English is not speaking English. You may find your student smiling and agreeing with everything you say, only to find out later that he/she understood very little of what you said. Have him/her repeat things back to you, so you know it was understood.

- When your student speaks, the sentences may seem awkward or abrupt at first. Know that the student may use extremes like “hot” or “cold” when they mean “warm” or “cool” because they do not have an extensive enough vocabulary to express themselves accurately.
- Use humor and be pleasant and encouraging when dealing with language barriers. Language is important, but caring gestures and warm smiles can oftentimes far outweigh spoken words.
- If your family has studied your student’s language and you would like to speak it, discuss with your student the possibility of arranging a limited time each day to practice the foreign language. Keep in mind that your student is coming to the U.S. to practice English.
- While Americans use compliments and thank-you’s freely, it may not be the “norm” in your student’s culture. Even though he/she may not voice gratitude, this does not mean that he/she does not appreciate your efforts.

FOOD

Many of the foods you prepare may be new to your student. Encourage him/her to try everything that is offered. Food allergies, if any, should be indicated in your student’s dossier.

Suggest that your student prepare a traditional dish from his/her country. This can be a lot of fun for your student and a memorable meal for your family.

Your meal schedules and habits may differ from what your student is used to. For example, if your family is expected to make their own lunch, you should clearly explain this and show your student what to do.

While your student is expected to use personal money for snacks or treats when out with family or friends, it is understood that **all** regular meals are to be provided by you, whether at home or in a restaurant.

MONEY MATTERS

Students are asked to bring pocket money for their personal expenses (approximately \$200-\$300/mo.) Students have been advised to bring an international debit or credit card with them for personal purchases. You may want to help your student budget his/her money during the stay by planning in advance how much money will be needed for special activities.

Students pay for postage, personal phone calls, souvenirs, museum and amusement park admissions, clothing, gifts, uniforms, books, etc.

It is understood that host families will provide food and housing, and assist in transporting their student to activities. If the student lacks sufficient funds for personal expenses, contact your Local Representative, so better arrangements can be made. Talk money issues out candidly. Talk to your student about leaving large amounts of money in his/her room or locker and about carrying too much money in a purse or wallet. On a related topic, remind your student to be

responsible with expensive personal items such as iPods, cell phones, and digital cameras. If your student would like to open a bank account, help them to do so. The following banks are “international student friendly”:

- Wachovia Commerce
- Bank of America
- National Penn

Remember, students **cannot** open interest-bearing accounts. Be sure to mention that your student simply wants an account into which they can have money wired.

FAMILY RULES

Nacel Open Door expects host families to set reasonable family rules and expects students to follow them. It’s ok to treat your student like a guest for a day or two while they are recovering from jet lag, but start treating them like a member of the family as soon as possible. Plan to discuss your family’s rules a few days after arrival. Explain your household rules and behavior expectations clearly. Some may be very automatic for you and your children. Don’t assume anything. Explain everything to your student. For example, one “rule” may be: *Don’t eat the last piece of cake before asking if anyone else would like some.* These rules vary from family to family and need to be clearly explained.

Your student should be expected to follow the same rules that your children are supposed to follow. Be patient, yet firm with what you expect. At the same time, remember to be flexible in order to treat your new son or daughter as an individual. Communicate openly with your student letting him/her know when you are happy or displeased. Make sure your student understands what you expect.

Try to understand that the “normal” way of doing things in America is not always the same as in other parts of the world. Good manners, proper behavior, and family rules may vary depending on the culture. For example, some students may not realize that the shower curtain should be kept inside the bathtub when showering. Most Korean bathrooms, for example, are completely tiled and there is a drain in the middle of the bathroom floor. Therefore, making sure the shower curtain is *inside* the shower is not automatic or “common sense.” When discussing your family rules be sure to include such rules as:

- **Meal times:** Explain your family’s schedule and whether snacks are acceptable in between meals. Students are expected to eat dinner with the family.
- **Daily chores:** Students have agreed to help with daily chores such as making their bed, clearing the table, picking up belongings, putting dirty clothes in the hamper, etc.
- **Occasional tasks:** Other household tasks that the student could help out with might include bringing in the mail, folding laundry, vacuuming, carrying the groceries, cleaning their room, etc.

- **Sleeping hours and curfew:** Set reasonable times in accordance with your own family's sleeping schedule. Students should not be permitted to stay up after 12AM as a general rule.
- **Telephone:** Your student should use a phone card when making long-distance phone calls. Many students will have their own cell phone. If your student wants to get a cell phone, we recommend that you **do not** sign a contract for him/her, or add the student to your plan. Students can buy a prepaid cell phone that does not need an adult signature.
- **Computer:** All teenagers spend time on the computer. Your student will rely heavily on the computer for school work and communication with home. Although your student may be on the computer more than you would like, it is an important resource for an IPSP student. We encourage students to find a balance between school work, computer use, and host family time. Students are encouraged to bring their own laptops. If your student is using your family computer, you may need to set time limits to accommodate all family users' schedules. Be sure your computer is properly equipped with current anti-virus and anti-spyware protection and instruct your student not to turn these safeguards off.
- **Dating:** Foreign teenagers often go out in groups as opposed to dating in the American sense. Dates can be allowed if you feel comfortable with the invitation. You should use your best judgment, as you would with your own children.
- **Church attendance:** Although Nacel Open Door expects your student to participate in family activities, we do make an exception when it comes to church attendance. Most students agree to attend church services with their family once a week if asked to do so. Please remember that we are not trying to change students' beliefs, but simply expose them to many different new experiences. Try to be sensitive to their religious feelings.

REMEMBER: It is necessary for the host family to establish the chain of command from the very beginning. You are in charge. Set the rules and let them know that you intend to enforce them.

SIBLING RIVALRY

It is normal for host siblings, at least once or twice during your student's stay, to become annoyed that you are giving so much attention to the student. Your children may feel left out at times. To cope with this, don't ask your children to make too many sacrifices for the student. Let your children know that you understand what's bothering them. Show that you care by asking their opinions and including them in making plans.

INSURANCE

All IPSP students are covered by medical insurance. You should have received an insurance card in your Welcome Packet. Please refer to the INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE sheet in your Welcome Packet for further details.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Be aware of cultural differences. You cannot assume that the American “norm” for good manners, proper behavior, morals, family rules, school conduct, etc. is the same as in the student’s home country. He/She may do things that annoy you at times, yet this same behavior is perfectly acceptable in his/her own home. It is your responsibility to let the student know, in a tactful and non-critical way, which behaviors are not acceptable here.

Personal habits also differ from country to country. Some students may not bathe as often as we do, some more often and longer. Some may not shave legs or underarms, may not use deodorant, change underclothes daily or do their own laundry. Explain what should or should not be flushed down toilets. Some countries put toilet paper in the waste basket because of the nature of their plumbing. Take nothing for granted.

Finally, be alert to signs of fatigue, confusion, physical discomfort, even homesickness. These are all signs of culture shock. Talk to your student about how he/she is feeling. Do not be surprised or hurt if your student does not open up to you and just wants to be alone. This is normal and will usually pass within a few weeks of your student’s arrival.

SCHOOL

IPSP students will take their school responsibilities seriously. Students will spend most of their free time studying. Your student may experience some comprehension difficulties at the beginning of the school year, but will quickly improve. If your student indicates that he/she would like a tutor to help them or the school indicates that a tutor is needed, call your Local Representative. Students are expected to meet minimum grade requirements as dictated by their school.

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in a sport or club offered by their school, as it is an important piece of the college application. Host families should assist the student with transportation to and from one sport or club per semester and/or help the student arrange a carpool with other students. Athletic participation is not guaranteed to IPSP students, because athletic eligibility is determined by the local school district and the state high school athletic association, if applicable. Students should speak with the athletic director at their school to determine eligibility.

FRIENDS

While Nacel Open Door encourages students to make American friends, it is natural for students to want to associate with other international students. It is easy to say “make American friends” but it is actually quite difficult to do so. Making American friends will take time. Remember to put yourself in your student’s shoes when they ask to do something with another international student.

SUPPORT NETWORK

Everyone at Nacel Open Door wants each host family and student to have a positive experience. Your Local Representative will be available to discuss your questions and concerns, no matter how big or small. Small problems can develop into larger problems if they are not addressed. If you are uncomfortable with your student's behavior, please address the issue immediately by either talking directly with your student or calling your Local Representative. We want to help, but we need to be made aware of a concern in order to help. By the same token, your student cannot change an undesirable behavior if they are not aware it is undesirable.

If you are having a problem with your student or need assistance, please follow the steps below:

- Call your Local Representative and inform him/her of the problem or situation.
- Give your Local Representative time to handle the issue.
- If you are unsatisfied with the suggestions offered or have an emergency and cannot reach your Local Representative, call the Regional Program Director.
- When you cannot reach your Local Representative and/or your Regional Program Director **and** you have a true emergency, call the Nacel Open Door 24-hour support hotline at **1-800-622-3553**. A live person will answer this number 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

In some cases, a placement may not work out and a student will need to be moved to a new family. It is extremely important to realize that most moves are made because the family and student were not a good match. The important thing is to make the move before bitterness and angry feelings set in. There should be no guilt or shame in this. With a different student, you could have a totally enjoyable experience. Try again!

HELPFUL HINTS FOR HOST FAMILIES

As Shared by Past Host Families

- Don't talk behind your student's back or through your own children. If you have something to say to your student, just say it.
- Be clear with your expectations. Don't say "Keep your room clean." Say exactly what you expect them to do, e.g. "Make your bed, put dirty clothing in the hamper, put trash in your waste basket." Be very specific.
- Don't use figures of speech. Avoid saying things such as "we are going to eat on the run tonight".
- Remember to put yourself in your student's shoes at times.
- Don't give your student special privileges you wouldn't give your own kids.
- Report unusual or disturbing behaviors to your Local Representative.
- Help with their homework if asked.
- Include your student in family activities. Help them balance family, friends, and school work. Do not be offended if they decline your offer to participate from time to time.
- Don't do anything now that you don't plan to continue all year. For example, your student can live for a whole year without eating Sushi if your budget does not allow for it. Do what makes you feel comfortable.
- Enjoy learning about each other.
- Attend the IPSP Orientation which will be held by your Local Representative sometime during your student's first six weeks in the US.
- Remember that your student's focus is on their education not the cultural experience like kids who only come for one year.
- Too often people say one thing and do another. Try to set a good example.
- Respect the student's desire for individuality and independence.
- Take an interest in your student's activities and friends.
- Try not to overreact. Overreacting can destroy trust and sever lines of communication.
- Do not place a scale in the bathroom if you are hosting a girl! 😊

ADOLESCENT ISSUES

This list represents the whole range of behaviors and characteristics generally considered part of the adolescent experience. Some of the items listed appear during the early stages of adolescence; others are more apparent later in the experience. All may be present with different levels of intensity. The adolescent stage has a definite beginning (the onset of puberty) and an indefinite end (no special event to mark the end of this stage of development). However, the desired outcome of adolescent development is the psychological separation from parents, a clearer and heightened sense of self as distinctly different and separate from parents, and the establishment of personal identity.

BEHAVIORS AND CHARACTERISTICS

1. Increased hormonal changes and production, resulting in the development of secondary sexual characteristics (menstruation, body hair, breast development, muscle development, etc.).
2. Increased physical growth, usually in a short period of time.
3. Preoccupation with self.
4. Importance and influence of peers, with more turning away from parents.
5. Extremes in emotions and reactions; rapid and unpredictable mood swings.
6. Sense of invulnerability (ie. nothing bad can happen to them).
7. Unpredictable behavior, sometimes very reasonable and charming, other times uncooperative and stubborn.
8. Impulsive behavior.
9. Increasingly self-analytical and critical; more interpretive.
10. Development of public/private person, need for privacy, definition of what can be shared and with whom.
11. Concern with world of ideas and ideals – abstract thinking.
12. Addressing choices in areas of friends, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, schooling, and career.

THOUGHTS FOR DEALING WITH ADOLESCENTS

- Establish clear expectations with logical reasoning to back them up, not just laws. If expectations are a list of “don’t because I said so,” they will be limited in effectiveness.
- If you want students to obey the rules or to behave in certain ways in certain situations, you have to constantly and repeatedly supply the reasoning behind the request. This can be frustrating because you have to do it over and over, but it means that eventually the person will internalize the behavior as a logical and rational response to a given situation. It clearly beats never-ending supervision and ordering people around.
- Position power is usually resorted to when there is an age or status difference between individuals and when some miscommunication has already occurred. A response or request given from solely a position of age or status will probably be accepted but

students rarely continue to honor such requests unless the person is present to see that they are followed through. Usually, using cooperative development limits, requests, and rationales, is a much better way to ensure compliance by a student than merely telling them what to do.

- When confronting a student who has violated the clearly established expectations, take the position of a loving adversary. Separate the person from the behavior. The behavior may be unacceptable, but that does not make the student a bad person. Besides, it is difficult changing whole persons, but changing a few behaviors might be possible.
- Despite all pop-psychology, it is rare that an adult and an adolescent can be friends in the sense of a mutual relationship in which each takes full responsibility for himself/herself. Truly mutual relationships are not that frequent among adults. If you treat an adolescent as though he or she were already a mature adult, expect to feel taken advantage of or disappointed. As an adult, you are a mentor and as such you must supply both support and direction.
- One thing that turns students off faster than anything is hollow praise. Learn to appreciate the struggle it is to be an adolescent. (If you have difficulty identifying, think of the awkward moments in your own youth.) Learn to give genuine and thoughtful positive feedback. This is one way of increasing the likelihood will repeat the behavior.
- To adolescents, being “cool” is of supreme importance. Although being “cool” often looks to adults as though it is conformity to a set of particularly faddish norms, being “cool” to adolescents is a way of demonstrating their “adult individuality”. Asking adolescents to do things that are “uncool” is usually hopeless. On the other hand, appealing to their image conscious sense of “cool” is often surprisingly successful.
- Sarcasm is not useful with most young people. It is perceived as something that adults are allowed to use on kids but not the other way around. When kids do it to adults, it is called being rude. It therefore becomes a power issue.
- Students keep their distance from adults who are know-it-alls. This makes it difficult to get to know them.
- Use your sense of humor as a way to make contact, not as a way to make fun of students.
- Do not deliberately embarrass a young person in public unless you don’t want him or her to trust you for a long time.
- Sometimes students are saying things between their words which they want someone to help them clarify.
- Students have a right to confidentiality as does anyone to whom you give your word. Therefore, be careful to promise confidentiality only when it can be honored.
- Students are people who have rights as do adults. These need to be clearly agreed upon, understood, and honored.

CULTURE SHOCK

One problem you are likely to encounter is culture shock. "Culture Shock" is the term used to describe the reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own. It is something that happens to everyone who spends a fair amount of time in another country. It can vary from feeling mildly "out of sorts" to causing intense discomfort.

For some people the bout with culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable. These are usually people whose personalities provide them with a kind of natural immunity. For most of us, however, culture shock is something we have to deal with when in a foreign culture. Culture shock is the occupational hazard you have to be willing to go through in order to have the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth.

Culture shock has two quite distinctive features:

1. It does not result from a specific event or series of events. It comes instead from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different from yours and which threaten your basic, unconscious belief that your customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are "right."
2. It does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause. Instead it is cumulative. It builds up slowly, from a series of small events which are difficult to identify.

Culture shock comes from:

- Being cut off from the cultural cues and known patterns with which you are familiar -- especially the subtle, indirect ways you normally have of expressing feelings. How to greet people and what to say when meeting, when to take statements seriously and when not - all the nuances and shades of meaning that you understand instinctively and use to make your life comprehensible are suddenly taken from you.
- Living over an extended period of time in a situation that is uncertain.
- Having your own values (which you had heretofore considered as absolutes) brought into question - which yanks your moral rug out from under you.
- Being continually put into positions in which you are expected to function with maximum skill and speed but where the rules have not been adequately explained.

SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK

Here is a list of some symptoms that may be observed in cases of culture shock.

- Homesickness and idealizing home
- Boredom, loneliness, or depression
- Withdrawal (i.e. spending excessive amounts of time reading; avoiding contact with host families; making friends with only other Asian exchange students, etc.)
- Too much sleep or too little sleep
- Eating too much, or having no appetite
- Frequent minor illnesses, including upset stomach, headaches
- Irritability or even hostility
- Feeling helpless, over-dependent
- Crying
- Rebellion against rules

Not everyone will experience a severe case of culture shock, nor will all the symptoms be observed. Many people ride through culture shock with some ease, only now and again experiencing the more serious reactions. But many others do not. For them it is important to know: 1) that the above responses can occur, 2) that culture shock is in some degree inevitable, and 3) that their reactions are emotional and not easily subject to rational management. This knowledge should give you a better understanding of what is happening, and strengthen your resolve to work at hastening recovery.

Before we examine what you can do to counteract culture shock, let's look at where it fits into the whole student exchange experience.

Some time ago people began to recognize that there were distinct stages of personal adjustment which virtually everyone who lived abroad went through (no matter where they came from or what country they were living in). These stages are:

1. Initial euphoria
2. Irritability and hostility
3. Gradual adjustment
4. Adaptation or bi-culturalism

Stage 1: Initial euphoria

Most people begin their stay with great expectations and a positive mindset. If anything, they come with expectations which are too high and attitudes that are too positive toward the host country and towards their own prospective experiences. At this point, anything new is intriguing and exciting. But, for the most part, it is the similarities which stand out. The recent arrival is usually impressed with how people everywhere are really very much alike. This period of euphoria may last for a week or longer, but the letdown is inevitable.

Stage 2: Irritation and hostility

Gradually, the focus turns from the similarities to the differences. And these differences, which suddenly seem to be everywhere, are troubling. Little, seemingly insignificant difficulties can be blown up to major catastrophes. This is the stage generally identified as "culture shock," and any of the symptoms on the previous page may be experienced.

Stage 3: Gradual adjustment

The crisis is over and the student is on the way to recovery. This step may come gradually. Once one begins to orient oneself and is able to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues and cues which passed by unnoticed earlier, the culture seems more familiar. It is more comfortable, and one feels less isolated. Gradually, a sense of humor returns, and the situation is not hopeless after all!

Stage 4: Adaptation and bi-culturalism

Full recovery will result in an ability to function in two cultures with confidence. Travelers will even find a great many customs, ways of doing and saying things, and personal attitudes which they enjoy, will definitely be missed when returning to the home culture. In fact, our students can expect to experience "reverse culture shock" upon returning home.

How long will culture shock last? That can vary with the length of the exchange. It also depends to some extent on the student's resiliency. There are a lot of character traits that help some people take to another culture more naturally than others. Keeping a sense of humor, setting realistic goals, and being able to accept not being perfect are key in adapting to a new culture. You can expect a let-up after the first dip, but be prepared for the second downturn which will probably be somewhat more severe.

PRESCRIPTION FOR CULTURE SHOCK

Granted that culture shock is virtually inevitable to some degree and that there are no easy remedies in the medicine cabinet, there are, nevertheless, things a student can do. There are positive steps you can suggest to your student to minimize the impact, while giving the support and encouragement needed to succeed.

Here's our prescription for action for our international students:

1. **Learn all you can** about your host country. One of the best antidotes to culture shock (although this may not make sense when you are in the midst of it) is knowing as much as possible about where you are.
2. **Look for logical reasons** behind everything in the host culture which seems strange, difficult, confusing, or threatening. This will reinforce the positive attitude that in fact there is a logical explanation behind the things you observe in the host culture. Take every aspect of your experience and look at it from the perspective of your hosts. Relax your grip on your own culture a little in the process. There's no way you can lose it, but letting go a bit may open up some unexpected avenues of understanding.
3. **Get busy!** Get out and meet people! Get involved in activities you enjoy!
4. **Make friends.** Open yourself to new people and new friendships, and you will embrace your experience to the fullest.
5. **Keep a journal.** Write down all of the things and feelings you are experiencing. Putting your emotions into words is the first step in understanding what's "bothering" you. Besides, the journal is a wonderful keepsake of your experience.
6. **Don't belittle the host culture.** Resist making jokes and comments that are intended to illustrate the stupidity of the "natives." Don't hang around other students who always complain about the U.S. culture; they will only reinforce your unhappiness.
7. **Talk about your feelings.** Identify a host national (your representative, a member of your host family, someone at school, a friendly acquaintance) who is sympathetic and understanding, and talk with that person about specific situations and about your feelings related to them. Talking with other students from your country can be helpful, but only to a limited extent and not at all under certain circumstances (see #6).
8. Above all, **have faith** - in yourself, in the essential goodwill of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of the experience.

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL: During the student's stay here in the USA they may wish to visit a friend, relative, or prior host family in another city or state. This type of travel (without the host family) is considered INDEPENDENT TRAVEL. They must obtain **permission** for this type of travel.

STEPS STUDENTS MUST TAKE:

1. Talk to the host family about the intended travel to be sure that their plans do not conflict with the host family's schedule.
2. Get permission from the high school if they will be missing school.
3. Complete and return an INDEPENDENT TRAVEL PROPOSAL form as directed at the bottom of the form. A copy of this form can be found in the Student Handbook. They can also find this form at www.nacelopendoor.org/IPSP.
4. Have the family they are visiting complete the RECEIVING FAMILY ACCEPTANCE FORM and return as directed at the bottom of the form.
5. Fax completed forms to the IPSP Travel Advisor at 651-846-4608.

Once the forms are submitted and the student's natural parents have signed a travel release, you will be notified via e-mail that their travel plans have been approved. If students do not allow sufficient time for the processing of these forms, their travel will be denied. It is recommended that students submit their proposals a minimum of 7 days before their travel date. **Students should not buy any airline, train or bus tickets until they have approval to travel!**

COLLEGE VISITS: If students would like to visit a college, they should discuss their plans with the host family. Many times host families are willing to provide students with transportation for a visit. If students are visiting a local college and their family offers to drive them there, they should offer to pay for gas and other related expenses, such as tolls and meals. If they want to visit a college independently, it is their responsibility to make the arrangements for the visit and to complete the INDEPENDENT TRAVEL PROPOSAL FORM. Students will not be granted permission to gather with friends on a college campus or to travel in groups. College visits are strictly for visiting a college to which they may want to apply to.

TRAVEL WITH THE HOST FAMILY: Any travel with a student's host family is allowed. If students will be traveling out of town with their host family (for example, on a vacation or sightseeing), the host family should contact their local rep with emergency contact information.

LOCAL TRAVEL: Travel around a student's immediate community is allowed as long as the host family gives them permission. For example, if they want to take public transportation to the mall or to the movies, this is permissible. They may also travel locally in a car driven by a friend or a host sibling as long as they have host family approval. Travel with friends to destinations outside their immediate community, must be approved by the Regional Program Director. Please contact your local representative for questions regarding local travel.

Nacel Open Door IPSP Independent Travel Proposal Form

Please use black ink and print neatly.

Date of proposal: _____ Date received (for office use): _____
Student name: _____ Current telephone: _____
Student's home Country: _____ Student Email: _____
Host family name: _____ Host Family Email: _____
Nacel Local Rep: _____ Rep Email: _____
Purpose of trip: _____

Dates of trip: _____ to _____
How will you be traveling?: _____
How will you get to the airport? _____
If traveling by car, who will be driving? How old is this person? _____
What is the name, address, and phone number of the adult you will be staying with?
Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

(The person above must complete the **Receiving Family Acceptance Form** and return it to the address at the bottom of the page prior to travel proposal acceptance.)

How do you know this person? _____
Emergency contact (name, address and phone) _____

Will you be missing school? Yes No (circle one)

IF YOU WILL MISS SCHOOL: I have spoken to _____ at my school and have been given permission to be away from school. He /She can be reached at the following phone number: _____.

Host Family Permission

I _____ (host family name) for _____ (student name) have been consulted with and agree to the independent travel that he/she proposes above. I (we) understand that this travel is independent from the IPSP program and that during his/her time away, our student will be responsible for him/herself. I (we) will be happy to welcome this student back into my/our home when he/she returns from this experience.

Host Parent signature(s) _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Fax completed form to: IPSP Department at (651-846-4608)
This proposal can also be found at www.nacelopendoor.org/IPSP



INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL DELAY TRAVEL APPROVAL!

RECEIVING FAMILY ACCEPTANCE FORM
for
IPSP INDEPENDENT STUDENT TRAVEL

I, _____, accept full legal responsibility for _____ while he/she is visiting with me from _____(arrival date) to _____(departure date).

Please initial that you agree with the following statements:

- I confirm that I have the Nacel Open Door office emergency number (**800-622-3553**).
- I confirm that the student will bring his/her medical insurance information with them.
- I will contact Nacel Open Door should the student become ill or injured.
- I confirm that the student will remain under my care and supervision during the travel dates specified above.
- I will immediately contact Nacel Open Door at the number above if there are any changes in the student's travel plans.

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Please fax completed form to: **IPSP Department (651) 846-4608**

This form can also be found at www.nacelopendoor.org/IPSP





INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAM

BASIC PROGRAM RULES

ACADEMIC

- School attendance is mandatory.
- Students must maintain the minimum grade point average accepted by their IPSP school.
- Students must follow the guidelines of their school's Student Handbook and be a student in good standing.

BEHAVIOR

Students must follow the host parents' rules in addition to the following IPSP rules:

- **NO SMOKING:** It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase cigarettes in the USA.
- **NO DRINKING:** Students caught drinking will be subject to being sent home.
- **NO DRUGS:** Students caught using or possessing any illegal substance will be sent home and could face criminal charges.
- **NO DRIVING:** Students are not allowed to operate any motorized vehicles, including automobiles, motorcycles, dirt bikes, riding lawn mowers, 4-wheelers, and jet skis. Students may take the classroom component of drivers education in school, but may NOT take the "on the road" component.
- **NO PORNOGRAPHY:** Viewing or downloading of pornographic material is prohibited.
- **SEATBELT USE:** Seatbelts must be worn when riding in any vehicle, as outlined by state law.
- **OBEYING U.S. LAWS:** Students not following the laws of the United States could be subject to immediate return to their home country.

TRAVEL

- Students must obtain permission from Nacel Open Door's Travel Advisor when traveling independent of their host family. Rules pertaining to independent travel can be found in the Host Family Handbook and the Student Handbook.
- Independent travel should be planned sufficiently in advance to allow for all paperwork and approval to be secured.

COMMITMENT

A great deal of time, effort, and financial outlay has been expended by the program on behalf of the student and the natural family. We expect students and schools to honor the Student and Natural Parent Agreement (found in the student dossier) stating that the student and his/her natural family will not proposition the school or host family about returning independently.