

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION OUTLINE FOR AFICE STUDENTS COMING TO THE US

Participants: Students and Natural Parents

Location: In all cities where students come from

Duration: Full day orientation with a food break for participants to socialize

PURPOSE OF EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

- Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961
- To enhance understanding between the people of the US and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges

FACTS ABOUT AFICE AND THE PARTNER ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF AFICE IN THE US:

- Role of the National Office in San Diego, California
- Role of the Community Representatives and Area Coordinators

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

- Requirements for J-1 Visas and the DS-2019
- Home country physical presence requirement
- The visa is necessary for school attendance
- All students are expected to return at the end of the school year

TRAVEL AND ENTRY INTO THE US

- To be discussed by the Overseas Organization re: itinerary, luggage, escort, T-shirt, etc.
- Appropriate travel documentation

INSURANCE

- Insurance is obligatory as each student must be fully insured
- Distribute insurance cards, claim forms and benefits pamphlet and discuss details about completing claim forms
- All students are covered for medical and hospital care. Dental care is included only in the cases of accident or emergency.
- List of benefits and other questions
- Pre-existing conditions

FEES/COSTS OF PROGRAM

- Breakdown of fees payable to overseas organization
- Description of other possible program costs (i.e. spending money, food, gifts, school books, etc.)

AMERICAN HOST FAMILY HOUSING

- Each family is visited in their home and interviewed by a Representative and is accepted only if they fulfill the requirements
- Families as volunteers
- Families may be younger or older
- Families may live in the country or city although most live in small communities

- Families may have young children, no children and some may have teenagers
- All families have one thing in common which is an interest in sharing with a student from another culture
- Responsibilities of the Host Family are board, room and hopefully, love
- Church and the host family
- You as a guest in the Host Family's home

RULES

- Rules set by AFICE are valid for all students with no exception. List of rules.
- Drinking of alcoholic beverages is not permitted under AFICE rules with the exception of occasional wine or beer in the Host Family home and with the permission of the Host Parents.
- Drugs of any kind, of course, are not permitted and a student will be sent home for any form of drug using
- Driving alone is not permitted. Cover driver's education agreement, insurance.
- Traveling alone is not permitted overnight or with other teenagers
- Natural parents, siblings and friends are not allowed to visit the student during their exchange program. The only exception to this rule would be the natural parents may visit at the very end of the program, AFICE must be informed well enough in advance, and only at the permission of the host family.
- Hitchhiking is not permitted
- Host Families must know where student is and who he/she is with at all times

SCHOOLS

- AFICE exchange students must take American History/American Government (one semester of each or one full year if combined) and English (one year)
- Exchange students are guests in the American school and therefore it is important for every student to keep their grades up and have a good attitude
- Exchange students are encouraged to join school and club activities
- Students usually take lunches to school. If so, the Host Family will provide the food to take. If the student buys his/her lunch at school, he/she must pay for it.
- EXCHANGE STUDENTS ARE NOT NECESSARILY SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL
- The school determines which students will be seniors depending on the record the students bring and the courses taken
- Exchange students who are seniors are not always allowed to graduate. Each school has its own rules which determine whether exchange students who have only participated for one year will be allowed to graduate
- Reiterate the additional school expenses that might occur

MONEY

- Average amount of spending money to be provided by natural parents each month
- General reserve amount that should be kept in the bank for emergencies or special activities per month
- Exchange students must not borrow money but should learn how to budget
- It is recommended that every exchange student have his/her own checking account, bank card, etc.
- If the student does not have sufficient money for his/her needs, the student should contact his/her Community Representative immediately

TELEPHONE CALLS/EMAILING

- Telephone calls/ emails home are not encouraged as it is very expensive and often makes a student feel lonesome
- When a long-distance call is made, it is necessary that the student first get the permission of a Host parent, and then immediately pay the bill when it comes in
- Getting a pre-paid phone card is the best if possible. If not, calls should be made collect, if calls are made at all
- Natural parents are also urged not to call very often as it can be detrimental to the student's exchange experience
- Corresponding rules for emailing and use of host family's computer. Students should limit the amount of computer time if the host family allows it. Students are in the US to bond with the host family, not communicate with friends and relatives back home

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

- American Community
- The difference between Host Parents and Natural Parents
- Attitudes towards sex/Students being sent home
- Exchange students living as a member of the Host family, sharing in chores and responsibilities of the home
- SHARE feelings and experiences with the Host family
- PARTICIPATE in activities – family, school and social. Socialize with American teens and try not to always be only with other exchange students from your own country.
- Do not compare with your life in your home country
- Acceptance and adjusting

SEXUAL ABUSE/EXPLOITATION

- How to Identify
 - Sexual abuse/exploitation includes many different acts
 - Unwanted touching of genital areas
 - Showing movies or pictures of people undressed or having sexual intercourse
 - Forcing you to participate in an unwanted sexual act
 - Inappropriate sexual comments or propositions
 - Threats of physical abuse or safety
 - How to avoid misidentifying sexual abuse/exploitation
 - Gestures that are "bad" in your country are not necessarily in the US
 - Hugs are a common form of greeting between friends/family
 - Friendship can be shown in the form of pats on the back, jabs on the shoulder, patting on the head, etc
 - Winking can indicate different signals: flirtation, friendliness, amusement, or saying "I'm just kidding"
- How to Report
 - If you believe you have been subjected to sexual abuse, call your Community Representative immediately. If Representative is not available, call Area Coordinator or National Office immediately.
 - Very Important that you contact someone at AFICE first and foremost so that the issue can be addressed immediately

- Important contact AFICE numbers are on the green student ID card you will be receiving at your orientation after you arrive in the US
- Important to remember
 - Action will be taken against anyone who sexually harasses or behaves inappropriately towards any exchange student. Likewise, action will be taken against anyone who falsely reports a claim of sexual abuse/exploitation.

HOMESICKNESS AND CULTURE SHOCK

- There are many small but different ways of doing things that will be a problem for exchange students in the beginning
 - a) Constantly using English
 - b) Different environment
 - c) Different culture, rules
 - d) May be accustomed to more freedom in the more homogeneous society of the overseas countries
- Things a student can do to help overcome this
 - a) Talk to people about your feelings
 - b) If something bothers you, talk about it
 - c) If you do not understand something, ask about it
 - d) Do not hide in your room or in front of a TV
 - e) Make time to make new friends and bond with host family
 - f) Join in activities even if you really do not feel like it
 - g) Talk in English even if it is not the best – people will understand and try to help you
 - h) Remember that if you work at it in time these feelings will pass

NATURAL PARENTS CAN HELP

- Write letters but phone calls and/or emails need to be kept to a minimum
- If your son or daughter calls with a problem, ask if they have talked to someone about it. Encourage them to contact the appropriate AFICE personnel.
- Write the Host family telling them about you and develop a relationship with them
- Be sure that your child has adequate funds their entire stay in the US and that he or she understands how they are to budget their money
- Enjoy the year with your son or daughter by encouraging them to make the most of their experience and watching them grow