



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

Oak Grove Lutheran School • Fargo, North Dakota

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Visit <http://www.oakgrovelutheran.com/en/default/admissions/> , including all forms, applications and policies.

Document References: St. Croix Lutheran High School and Quest International

HOST FAMILY INFORMATION

- Prospective host parents must complete an Oak Grove Host Family Profile.
- State law requires both parents/guardians of the host family as well as any adult (18 years of age or older) residing in the home to undergo a background check before a student will be assigned to them. Oak Grove will pay for the administration of the background check and all information in regards to the background check will be kept confidential to Oak Grove Administration and the parents/guardians.
- Host families must complete a Host Family Orientation Class before the student's arrival. Please check with the International Coordinator as to when this class will be held each summer.
- Host families are expected to house the student for a full academic year (AUGUST-MAY). Host families will be evaluated at semester time as well as the end of the year.
- After review and approval by school administration, an international student is assigned a host family by Oak Grove's International Coordinator.
- Oak Grove will transmit the host family profile to the international student's family and the host family will also receive a profile of the student. This provides both the student and the host family with family information to help the transition when school begins.
- Host parents receive a room/board payment in the amount of \$750 per month over a 10-month period (AUGUST-MAY) paid at the end of each month. This amount may be prorated, according to the actual days the student resides with the family.
- Please include the international student in family activities as is comfortable and appropriate for you. If traveling out of town or other responsibilities arise, an approved temporary host home can be used for the international student. Contact the International Coordinator for more information. A minimum of a 48-hour notice is needed to find temporary housing for students. A fee of \$20/day that the student will be housed will be collected prior to the student's arrival at the temporary home. This payment should be submitted to the International Coordinator.
- Host parents/guardians will be given a copy of the student's medical and liability consent form to show a doctor in the event that you may need it.

Host Family Responsibilities

The "official" role as a host family is to provide a caring and supportive environment for an international student. The student will learn about American culture from experiences with friends, school, community, but more importantly, the student will learn the most from living with a host family.

The host family is responsible for the following:

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- **An appropriate living area.** A bedroom must be provided for each international student. Sharing of a bedroom is not permitted unless under special circumstances, which must be approved by the International Coordinator prior to placement of the student in the home.
- **All meals at home.**
- **Transportation.** *Note: Students are instructed to learn their family's schedules first and not to make plans that involve driving them someplace without first getting permission from their host PARENTS.*
- **Setting rules.** Host families are to set rules and communicate them with the international student. It is encouraged to be clear and consistent by writing rules down. Posting the rules/expectations in a common area is strongly encouraged.

Areas/Rules to consider:

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Computer, phone and TV use | - Household chores |
| - Bedtime hours | - Coming & going (communicating where they will be) |
| - Homework requirements | - No Drinking or Smoking |
| - Personal privacy | - Snacks |
| - Shower and bathroom guidelines | - Laundry |
| -Meal preparation | - Transportation |
| -Having friends/company over | - Family meetings |
| - Appropriate clothing (may need to discuss dressing for the weather, ex. winter clothes) | |

****Remember that the international student doesn't know the host family's rules or expectations, no matter what age they are. NOT communicating the house rules and expectations to them may cause confusion and unnecessary stress for everyone.**

Host Family Considerations

Encourage an international student to attend church with the family. If the student objects to attending church, do not require attendance but continue to encourage them and invite them.

When communicating with an international student, speak clearly and distinctly. Remember that one needs to speak slower, not louder. International students will be at different levels of proficiency with the English language. Be patient and continue to try and help the student's English ability; engage the student in conversation on a daily basis.

About International Students

International students will come from a varied background. Host families are encouraged to try to learn about his/her family and life-style at home from his/her perspective. There will be times when the student might seem offended by things that happen in a host home. Encourage open and honest communication at all times. Try not to be judgmental, but rather remember that cultures are uniquely different. There will also be times when the student unknowingly will do something that is offensive and/or rude. Always keep in mind, NO CULTURE IS GOOD OR BAD, JUST DIFFERENT!

The key to hosting an international student is a combination of patience, love, and support. It is important that the international student becomes a member of the family and not treated as a guest. Bonding with the student may not occur immediately, it takes time for both the host family and the student to adjust. Eventually the student will become part of the family. Here are some suggestions:

- By becoming involved in the student’s life, a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation will develop.
- Explain language differences, American slang words and phrases; this will help prevent the student from being misunderstood or embarrassed while trying to communicate.
- When making decisions about letting the student participate in something, it is suggested to ask oneself, “Would I let my own child do this?” If a host family is not sure about the decision, talk to the student, and allow him/her to be involved in the decision making process.
- Become interested in the student’s country and customs; this lets the student know that they are important.
- Be flexible but firm. The more accepting a host family is of an international student, the more enjoyable the exchange of lifestyles and cultures will be. Let the student know what is expected in the way of behavior. Be open and honest about this from the start; young people want to know what is expected of them.
- Do not treat a student as though he/she is “company.” It is important that they participate and be incorporated into family and school activities/routines.

Communication

Responsibilities and privileges should be the same for the international student as they are for host family children. Please keep in mind that international students are teenagers, and teenagers are the same throughout the world. They will test the boundaries of the host family (as well as their own family), evaluate their personal relationships and encounter new/exciting experiences. Like adolescents everywhere, international students will be very independent and mature at times, yet reach out for support and guidance.

Weekly family meetings have proven to open lines of communication and increase understanding of expectations. It is encouraged to meet as an entire family on a designated day, once per week. Have an agenda for the meeting and allow for everyone to speak openly without fear of being judged. This will create a “safe” atmosphere. Have everyone use a planner or calendar so weekly plans can be communicated openly and early and have everyone record events in their own planners. This has helped significantly to reduce transportation problems as well as unrealistic expectations.

International student’s English skills range from fair to excellent, but it may take them a while to “tune in” to the regional English. Often the student will say “yes” to almost everything; don’t accept this as proof of understanding. If something important is said to the student at the first meeting, repeat it again at least once in the next day or two. Continue to reiterate important things on a weekly basis for the first month or more until it is evident the expectation has been communicated. When checking for understanding, don’t ask, “Do you understand?” as the response will more than likely be a “yes” even if little/no understanding took place. Instead, try having the student repeat what was said using their own words. This will allow their level of understanding to be measured. Additionally, as with most teenagers, international students will need to be reminded of family household rules from time to time.

Student Adjustment

Adjusting to a new culture will take time. Both the student and host family will find themselves making adjustments. Be ready to teach and to learn. Remember, an international student is not yet an adult.

The first few weeks can be very stressful for them. Try to be patient and understanding, and try to keep a sense of humor. Culture shock is “a condition of anxiety and disorientation that can affect someone suddenly exposed to a new culture.” For the student, anxiety and disorientation may show itself in many ways. It often develops after the initial excitement of being in the United States wears off. Symptoms vary from student to student. The international student may show some of the more common symptoms or, perhaps, none at all. Keep an eye out for difficulties, because the symptoms of culture shock can be very much like common teenage behavior.

Symptoms of culture shock include:

- Excessive sleeping
- Frequent, ongoing criticism of the U.S., comparison with “better” things at home
- Weight gain or loss
- Irritability or anger without good reason
- Depression, spending a lot of time alone in his/her own room
- Excessive homesickness
- Uncommunicative behavior

International students may not be able to express what he/she is feeling; they may feel their only recourse is to either “lash out” or “clam up.” The student may think that moving to a new host family could solve the problems that they are experiencing. Be patient and ask the Oak Grove International Coordinator for help. It is hard not to take this behavior personally, but be assured that their behavior does not reflect on the host family.

Even though the student has heard a lot about what it means to be an international student, they may not be prepared for the reality. The student may make comparisons between the U.S. and their home country. Criticism is a common defense mechanism used by students to make themselves feel secure in their living arrangements. They may also revert to cynicism or sarcasm.

Keeping an open line of communication is crucial in conquering culture shock. Help the student understand his/her emotions. Encourage physical exercise and participation in different activities to distract the student from thinking too much about their home country.

Homesickness

Homesickness is often associated with culture shock. Host families are encourage not to feel guilty about an international student’s unhappiness. If the student continues to be unhappy and depressed long enough for concern, please contact Oak Grove’s International Coordinator.

Holidays can also be depressing for an international student. Encourage the student to share their traditions and customs with the family. Also, keep the student actively involved in the family’s holiday celebration. Homesickness and culture shock can be combated with patience and understanding.

Sources of information and help with an international student:

- Oak Grove’s website, www.oakgrovelutheran.com
- Cindy Vought, International Coordinator
- Darrin Roach, High School Principal
- Deb Lackmann, Director of Admissions

HOST FAMILY HOUSE RULES

HOST FAMILY NAME _____ INTERNATIONAL STUDENT _____

*In order to avoid any confusion within the family regarding house rules for the international student, please explain and document these rules along with any other personal expectations of the international student. Please fill this worksheet out with the international student upon arrival and submit a photo copy to Oak Grove's International Coordinator before the start of the school year. Remember, there might be words in this contract that the international student doesn't know or understand. Be ready to teach and make sure the student is fully aware of your expectations. **Violation of these house rules may result in the student's probation and/or termination.***

What time does the host family got to bed? Parents _____ Children _____

What time is 'lights out'? _____

What time is curfew? School nights _____ Weekends _____

Who changes the sheets? _____ How often? _____

Where are dirty clothes placed? _____ Who does the dirty laundry? _____

Who makes meals and what are the responsibilities for meal time? _____

What rules pertain to use of the bathroom? _____

What rules pertain to the TV? _____

Internet usage: How many hours per day/week? _____

Are downloads allowed from the internet? _____

What rules pertain to phone usage? _____

It is recommended that students use their own cell phone or purchase a phone card.

What rules pertain to having friends over? _____

When friends come over, where can we be in the house? _____

What are chores exist? _____

Other: _____

Host Mother Signature _____ Date: _____

Host Father Signature _____ Date: _____

International Student Signature _____ Date: _____ p.7

HOST FAMILY & INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

By signing below, we acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the *Host Family and International Student Handbook* for Oak Grove Lutheran School. We also acknowledge that we are partnering with Oak Grove Lutheran School by participating in the International Program and will continuously strive to be in harmony with the mission of Oak Grove as well as the successful development of the International Program. We agree to uphold the rules and policies put in place by Oak Grove, as outlined in the *Student Handbook* and the *International Program Student and Host Family Handbook*, as well as respect all decisions made by its Administration. Failure to uphold the rules and policies may result in termination from the program if deemed necessary by Oak Grove's Administration.

Host Family Representative _____ Date: _____

International Student _____ Date: _____

Oak Grove Administrator: _____ Date: _____

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

In case of illness, accident or injury, I/we grant permission to Oak Grove Lutheran School, its administration, representatives, host parents, faculty, or staff to authorize examination and treatment for my/our child, _____ (student's name), by qualified medical personnel.

I/we also grant Oak Grove Lutheran School, its administration, representatives, host parents, faculty, or staff all necessary permissions to act as legal guardians, especially in emergencies, whether medical or other, including surgical operations or any other treatment.

I/we accept full financial responsibility for any medical attention needed for my/our child.

This authorization also grants permission to release information regarding my/our child in order to receive any and all inoculations or immunizations required by federal, state and/or school authorities for participation in any Oak Grove Lutheran School program. This medical release authorization shall be valid for the entire duration of my/our child's enrollment at Oak Grove Lutheran School.

Signature of Natural Father or Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Natural Mother or Legal Guardian

Date

LIABILITY RELEASE AND PARENT CONSENT FORM

We, the undersigned, as the participant, and the natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of a participant in a program organized and directed by Oak Grove Lutheran School, hereby release Oak Grove Lutheran School, its Board of Regents, administration, faculty, coordinators, host parents, and staff, from any and all current and future claims, charges, costs and/or causes of action for loss of property, personal injury, illness, accident or death sustained by the participant for the duration of the participant's enrollment in any program at Oak Grove Lutheran School, whether covered by insurance or not. We further understand and agree we are responsible for any loss, damage or injury caused by the participant in the programs at Oak Grove Lutheran School. *We understand and agree that the participant will be subject to authorities and faculty of the school and host family, and that he/she must follow the rules, as set forth by the Oak Grove Lutheran School and host family.*

As the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the participant, we agree to supply our child with sufficient spending money to cover his/her needs and expenses for the duration of his/her program at Oak Grove Lutheran School. We understand and agree that Oak Grove Lutheran School is not responsible for my/our child's money or personal property, whether lost or stolen, while he/she is participating in any program at Oak Grove Lutheran School. *We grant Oak Grove Lutheran School permission to use photographs, or any other materials, in which the participant may appear, for promotion or publicity of the school's programs.*

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Natural Father or Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Natural Mother or Legal Guardian

Date

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT

- Students attending school on an F-1 Visa must obey all school rules and regulations; a failure to do so, will result in termination without a refund of program fees paid. Oak Grove will not provide a replacement family if the international student is not cooperative and respectful to the host family and/or is creating difficulties for the host family.
- Students are expected to perform academically, and act appropriately and respectfully at all times while attending Oak Grove, in accordance with the *Student Handbook*, and while living with a host family. Students are to obey by all policies and procedures within the *Student Handbook* and the *International Program Student and Host Family Handbook*.
- Students must be enrolled in high school as a full time student. School attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to maintain a C average at the end of each quarter. If a student demonstrates a lack of effort in any class and is failing this subject, he/she may risk termination of his/her F-1 Visa by Oak Grove. If deemed necessary, the student will then be automatically terminated from the Oak Grove International Program and will be returned to their home country at the expense of their natural family. Please refer to academic eligibility in Oak Grove's *Student Handbook*.
- Students must abide by all local, state and federal laws. If a student breaks any of these laws he/she is subject to immediate return to home country, with no refund of tuition and fees.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages, including beer and wine, or use of tobacco products is prohibited by all Oak Grove students, regardless of legal smoking or drinking ages. All illegal use, purchase, or possession of alcohol, drugs, or other harmful controlled substances is prohibited. Purchasing such items with intent to distribute is also forbidden and grounds for dismissal from Oak Grove. Refer to pages 7 & 8 "Expectations of International Students" for the rest of the rules.
- International students are not allowed to take a job during their stay. The only exceptions are occasional jobs, such as yard work or baby-sitting, for which a U.S. social security number is not needed. Any such jobs must not interfere with schoolwork and are only allowed with the host family's permission.
- All international students are to arrive no earlier than 10 days before the start of school. Students must leave no later than 7 days after the last day of school.

By signing below, we understand that our child is responsible for upholding all of Oak Grove's program rules throughout the duration of the program. We, and our child, will respect all decisions made by the Oak Grove Administration. Failure to uphold these rules may result in early return to the home country at our expense and without refund of program fees. We also acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the Oak Grove International Program Student and Host Family Handbook in its entirety.

SIGNATURES:

Natural Father _____ Natural Mother _____

Student _____ Date _____