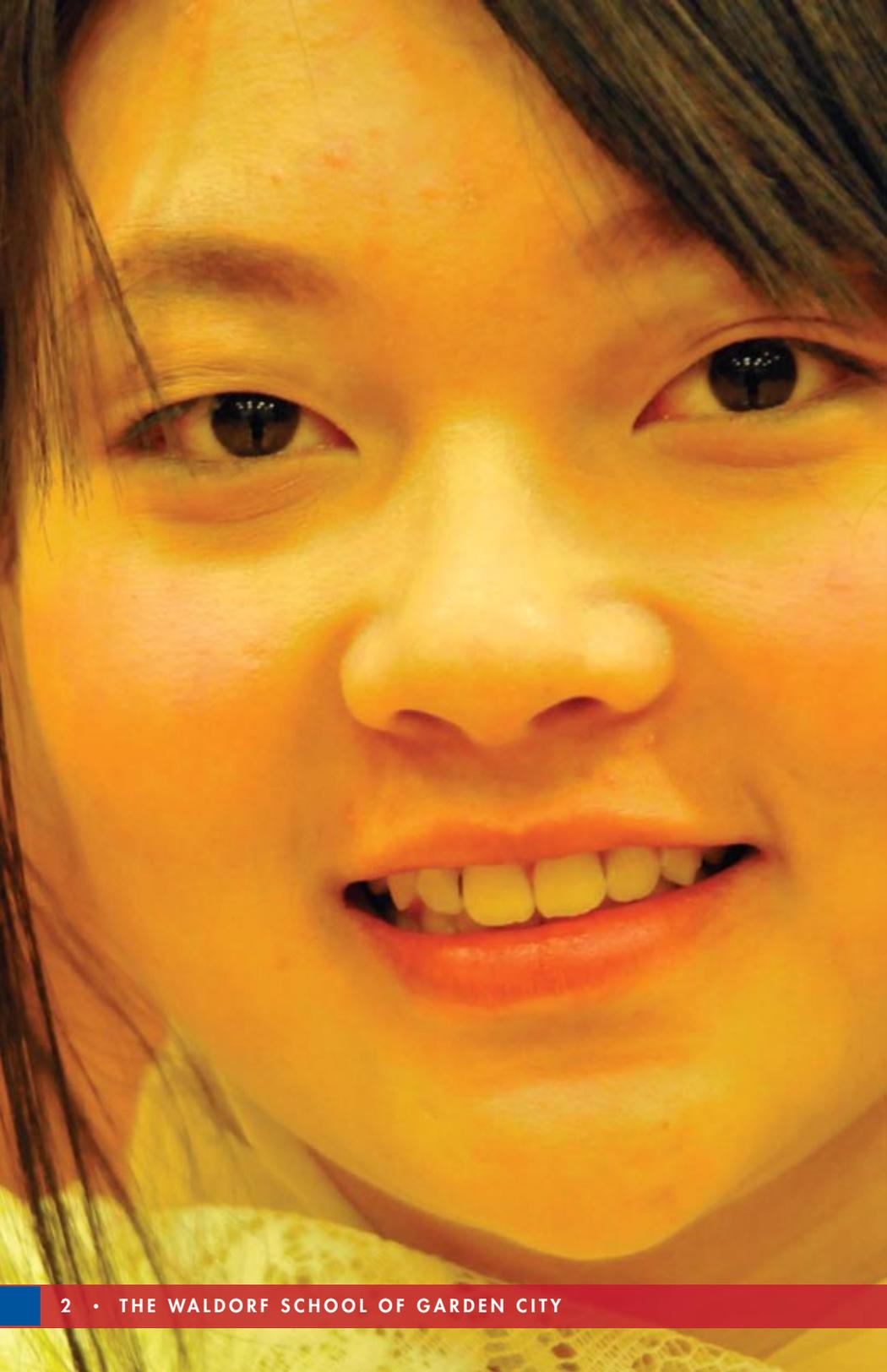




WALDORF
SCHOOL
of GARDEN CITY



Homestay Program



Hosting a Student

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Waldorf School of Garden City International Student Program homestay parent!





WHAT WE REQUIRE OF HOMESTAY PARENTS

We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure a positive homestay experience for each visiting student and for each homestay.

HOMESTAY SETTINGS MUST OFFER STUDENTS:

- A clean and well organized living environment
- A private bedroom, which includes a comfortable bed, study table, and lamp
- Easily accessible bathroom and laundry facilities
- three substantial meals a day and nutritious snacks
(you should discuss the lunch program at our school with the student and make sure they understand how the cafeteria works and whether or not they will participate in buying lunch from the school or will wish to bring something from home.)
- transportation to and from school, if required
- airport pick up upon arrival and drop off at departure
- opportunities to participate in family activities
- support for student interest in cultural, athletic and community activities
- a key to the home
- laundry facilities (You may expect older students to do their own laundry if you wish.)
- emotional support if the student suffers from homesickness or difficulties at school
- academic support (help with homework if possible, communication with teachers, attendance at parent-teacher-student interview, etc.)
- inclusion in family outings, trips to restaurants, special occasions and recreational activities
- access to the common living areas of the house
- transportation to planned events and activities
- the guidance and support reasonable to expect of adults who are assuming responsibility for the care of a young person who is far from their own family

KEY SCHOOL FUNCTIONS HOMESTAY PARENTS MUST PARTICIPATE IN:

- Attend all parent class meetings (2-3/year)
- Attend parent teacher conferences (2/yr)
- Participate in fall fair class responsibilities in October
- For all sophomores during the parents must be available during the Sophomore Play (in January) to drop off and pick up students at evening and weekend rehearsals
- For Juniors: (in June) help work to prepare and host the senior class graduation on the last day of classes and the following day
- For the senior class, parents must be available during the Senior Play (in June) to drop off and pick up student at evening and weekend rehearsals
- For all students: occasionally drive students to school or a classmate's home in order to work on student projects done in small groups
- Be available to drop off and pick up students on the Saturday eve of the High School Dinner (approx. 6-9) in December.

It is important to have a conversation with your student about how the members of your family interact and how your family functions. Many students come from cultures that have expectations that are different than our own. Clear explanations during the first days together will help the student to understand and to feel more at home.

Some students will not have the same life skills as those that we hope to have instilled in our own children. Your student might never have made lunch or had to do laundry at home. While you may want your student to be responsible for chores such as these, it is important to realize that they might need coaching through the first few times they attempt them.

Also remember that most of our students are active teens with busy after school lives. Most are here to experience as much as possible. They often will need rides to and from their extracurricular activities.



Your agreement to serve as a homestay parent includes providing this transportation, as you would for your own children, whenever possible.

Many students and their parents expect that they will be the only international student in the home. As part of your commitment to our International Program, you have agreed to ask permission, in advance, before accepting any other student from any other agency into your home.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD THE STUDENT PAY FOR?

The homestay family is not financially responsible for the personal expenses of the student. These are the responsibility of the student and his natural parents and include:

- All clothing
- School supplies
- Personal toiletries (It is reasonable to include soap, shampoo and toothpaste in the bathroom)
- Long distance phone calls (We suggest students purchase phone cards.)
- Medicines and medications of all kinds
- Dental work and eye exams
- Haircuts or other personal services
- Independent entertainment and expenses (If your family is going out for dinner or to a movie you should pay for the student. If the student chooses to eat in a restaurant or go to a movie with friends, the student should pay.)
- Costs associated with participating in school-sponsored activities such as graduation ceremonies, school dances, trips other than those specific to the school's program, and/or extra-curricular sports.
- Costs related to renewal of student visas and airplane tickets home.

Some families plan trips and special excursions such as ski holidays and would like their student to participate. We understand that including the international student should not become a financial burden on either the homestay family or the student. It is reasonable for a homestay family to offer the prospective trip to the student and let him or her know how much it will cost to participate.



HOW CAN I BEST PREPARE MY FAMILY AND MYSELF FOR THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE?

Hosting a student can be extremely rewarding for all members of your family, and being a well prepared and involved homestay family will only enhance everyone's experience. Some anxiety is expected if you have never hosted an international student, and it is a good idea to discuss the expectations of all family members before the student arrives. Children may think that the student will be like a new brother or sister or that they will become best friends. In fact this doesn't happen very often. Sharing the same home does not guarantee that your own children and the student will have anything in common with each other.

An honest discussion about the difficulties of forming a cross-cultural friendship, with the added barrier of language, can save disappointment later on. The more you know about the country and culture that your student comes from, the better able you will be to understand and support them.

Once an International student is matched to a family you should start regularly communicating with one another and provide as much information as you can. Students like to know about extracurricular

sports and activities, planned holidays; and clothing required for our climate. Get everyone in the family involved and communicating on a regular basis.

Prepare your student's room. Lay out towels and make sure that the bed has fresh linens on it. If possible add a low maintenance plant, magazines and pamphlets and some small gift or treat that is age appropriate. Remove your family photos and other pictures to allow the student to make the room their own.

Visit the library and take out some books about the country your student comes from. If you have the books on hand when the student arrives they can be the basis of conversation about the country. Make a list of things to talk about and things to do during the first few days and weeks. Prepare a welcome for your student: a gift, flowers, or some other thoughtful gesture of welcome.



WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS?

Please keep in mind that the student will likely be very tired upon arrival and need time to recover from jet lag, or fatigue. Most often, there is a period of adjustment required by the length of the trip and the time difference. Homestay families are encouraged to:

- Provide the student with the opportunity to call home as soon as they arrive. Your student may need help with this. Speak to their parents personally to let them know that their child is safe and sound and that you are pleased to have them with you. Voice tone matters, even when the student's parents are unable to understand everything that you say!
- Discuss how you would like the student to address you and other family members.
- Introduce your student to extended family members, neighbors and close friends.
- Provide all emergency numbers and contact information on a card the student can keep in his or her wallet.
- Discuss the normal household routines regarding bathroom times, meals and bedtimes.
- Discuss the amenities in the student's room.
- Explain student responsibilities for telephone and computer use, household tasks, such as cleaning his or her room and helping with meals.
- Outline expected curfews for both weekdays and weekends.
- Provide house keys and security codes and procedures.
- Help arrange for a personal cell phone, if desired, and inform the high school office of the student's cell number.
- Go over school information and discuss the plans and the times for getting to school. Make sure the student knows the route from your home to school. If your school district will provide bus transportation (this will vary from school district to school district), register the student with the school district's transportation department. You will be expected to

show that you are the student's legal guardian residing in that school district.

- Remind the student that you will be responsible for supporting their learning and development throughout their time with you. This will include contact with the school and attention to their attendance, as well as support for any homework questions they might have.
- Discuss extracurricular activities and interests and what the student would like to get involved in.
- Keep the student busy, but also arrange for some time alone to recover and assimilate all that they are learning in these first few days.

Orienting an international student requires a commitment of time. Time must be spent getting acquainted with the student, discussing boundaries and working out rules for living together. Most importantly, time must be spent with the student in listening—talking about new feelings, questions, confusions, insecurities, traditions, and life in general. Your student is dealing not only with a foreign country, food, school, and customs, but also with normal teenage feelings and issues. Establish a pattern of daily conversation. Focus on making the student comfortable and your own feelings of nervousness and anxiety will quickly disappear. Involve everyone in the family in the process.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INITIAL PROBLEMS THAT A STUDENT MAY EXPERIENCE?

While each study abroad experience is unique, most students face some predictable challenges at one point or another during their time with a homestay family. Some students suffer from several overlapping conditions for the first few weeks or, in some cases, even months:

JET LAG: Many students have traveled through several time zones to reach Long Island. They may suffer from the effects of jet lag for up to two weeks, including sleeping problems, drowsiness at the wrong time of day, loss of appetite, general fatigue, and disorientation.

CULTURE SHOCK: There are various predictable phases to this experience.

DIFFICULTIES WITH COMMUNICATION: Problems with communication occur with students from every country and at every level of English proficiency. Remember, all students will have some difficulty adjusting to our language, including its rhythm, intonations and slang terms.

HOMESICKNESS: Many students will become homesick, especially during the first months after their arrival. Symptoms may include moping around the house, wanting to be alone, wishing to go home, not liking school, not making new friends, loss of appetite, and not communicating with the homestay family. Homesickness is not a rejection of the support that your family members are offering. Homesickness is a natural human longing for what is most familiar. You may want to discuss these adjustment issues with Brian DiUbaldo, high school guidance counselor.

LONELINESS: Some students may feel very alone in this strange new situation. They may feel like outsiders in the community, in the school, or even in your home. Limited English ability may contribute to their feelings of isolation.

MOOD SWINGS: Even though they come from another country, our students are still teenagers and are dealing with the physical and

mental changes that all of us go through during this stage of life. The emotional roller coaster so familiar to the parents of teenagers is a necessary part of growing more connected to their world and to their inner lives. International students, like your own, will appreciate your calm and reflective consideration during these challenging times.

Some students, attempting to cope with the change in their lives, will spend hours on the phone, email or messenger systems with family and friends in their home country in an attempt to stay connected to familiar surroundings.

If you suspect that your student is suffering from distressing feelings, talk with and help them to understand, explaining that their feelings are understandable, that it will get better in time, and that you would like to help. Plan outings or activities together and develop the habit of spending time together each day. Encourage the student to become involved in all family activities and to participate in extracurricular activities at school. Talking through these experiences can lead to a closer relationship and will allow your student to know that you will be there for them during difficult times.

WHAT KIND OF GUIDELINES SHOULD I HAVE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

International students are expected to follow whatever reasonable guidelines you have for other members of your household. It is important to remember that while the student is an active member of your family there are also broader guidelines that they are required to adhere. The following are suggestions for guidelines you might want to discuss, some of which you may choose to adjust for the age of your student. They include:

- Being at home on school nights, unless participating in an organized activity.
- Having an age-appropriate curfew for weekend nights. We recommend 10 PM on weekdays and Midnight on weekends for the average 16 year old.
- Letting you know where they are at all times. Attending school every day that school is in session, unless they are ill.

- Asking ahead of time if they need a ride to an event, or if they wish to have friends overnight, etc.
- Assisting with some age-appropriate duties in the home.
- Respecting family guidelines regarding table manners, use of household appliances, laundry, shower times, sleepovers, etc.
- Respecting your expectations regarding visitors in your home. Please discuss notice, times and other aspects, such as snacks. Make it clear that you must be home before there can be guests in the evening and that, out of concern for their safety, having guests of the opposite sex in the student's bedroom with the door closed is not acceptable.
- Refraining from using drugs or alcohol.
- Never driving the family car.

Important note: No international student should be left alone overnight. Every student in our program is considered a minor and adult supervision, discussed first with School, must be arranged if you are away.

Discuss your guidelines early and often, making sure that the student understands. Deal with a few at a time and reach mutual agreement about as many as possible. Explain the reasons for your rules and that many of these guidelines are part of the International Program policies.

HOW DO I ENSURE MY STUDENT'S SAFETY?

As homestay parents, you must be aware that safety is key. Students must be properly supervised at all times. Students should not be left alone overnight for any reason. If you plan to be away, make certain your student stays with an adult who has been approved by the child's parents and inform the school.

If a student asks to participate in a "sleepover, make certain to check the particulars with the adult supervisors at the other home. Only approve of a sleepover if that conversation reassures you that the situation is both safe and acceptable. In other words, use the same good judgment that you would with your own child.

WHAT IF MY STUDENT GETS SICK?

Every student entering our program is required to have (AND SHOW PROOF OF) medical insurance coverage with the following minimum benefits:

- Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$10,000
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.
- Insurance must be in effect for international students during the period of time they are enrolled at our school. An insurance policy secured to meet the benefits requirements must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of “A-” or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of “A-I” or above, a Standard and Poor’s Claims Paying Ability rating of “A-” or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above.

Below are some providers that market policies fulfilling the above requirements. Please note that the Waldorf School of Garden City does not endorse the following providers. Students are responsible for selecting and purchasing their own insurance coverage, however, it is the host families’ responsibility to make sure that they have procured this insurance and to inform the school if they have not”

CMI Insurance Worldwide: www.cmi-insurance.com

Cultural Insurance Services International:
<http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

International Student Organization: www.isoa.org

If your student is ill, it is the homestay parent’s responsibility to excuse them from school attendance and then seek appropriate medical attention.



WHAT ABOUT FOOD?

Some typical American meals may appear quite exotic to an international student. Certainly the food you serve in your home will be different from the food they are used to. People around the world derive great comfort from familiar and favorite foods. A bowl of noodles or a cup of familiar tea can make a real difference for a homesick student.

While many students adjust quickly to an American diet, some take much longer than others. While we do not expect that you will make drastic changes to your family’s eating habits, we do ask that you are sensitive to your student’s need for some familiarity as well. The North American diet is largely based on wheat and dairy which students from certain cultures find difficult to tolerate. Raw vegetables and heavier meats may cause digestive problems, especially for Asian students. Some students might have special dietary needs related to health, religion, or personal preference. These considerations should always be respected. Some foods may be new or seem strange to the student. Encourage students to try, at least once, each new dish, but be accommodating to their preferences and do not force foods upon them.

Eating times, table manners, and methods of serving and presenting food will also be different from their familiar routines. In many cases, American meal behavior is more casual than that experienced in a student's home country. In some, children are expected not to speak. In others, the family does not speak together much, as all focus upon an appreciation of the food prepared and the creation of a quiet, reflective time. Learn about your student's experiences at meal times and help them to slowly adjust to your style of dining.

Young people the world-over like snacks. Please discuss this with your student, explaining what snacks and drinks your family will have available and which foods ought to be left for the main meal. Give your student a tour of the kitchen and the refrigerator, pointing out appropriate between-meal snacks and what they can help themselves to. In some Asian cultures it is impolite to "help yourself" to something. Be sure to explain to your student that the fruit bowl or snack cupboard can be accessed at any time. Take the student food shopping with you, especially to a large food store where

various ethnic foods are available. Encourage the student to bring a favorite recipe from home so you can learn to cook it.

Have a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables on hand. If you are hosting an Asian student, stock up on the appropriate type of rice as well. Rice is an important part of Asian diets. If your student wants rice every day, please provide it, as it is important "comfort food" for many.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES I MIGHT EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR?

Because we are dealing with individuals and different cultures, no two experiences are ever the same. We have found from experience that many of the students experience some degree of difficulty coping with new surroundings and new language. Many of the issues can be addressed by open and honest communication but, inevitably, some problems will arise.

Some families limit the use of a telephone to the hours before 10 PM. We ask you to be aware that for students from Asia, this may be the only time when they can reach their families. We suggest that you set up a mutually agreeable time so the student can call home or receive calls from home.

Another issue that arises is computers and use of the Internet. The computer is a fact of life. However, its use needs to be monitored e.g. which sites are visited and the amount of time spent on the computer. Sites that may cause concern within your family may be acceptable for the student to view within their own home.

Students may have questions or concerns about their course schedules at school. If your student has any questions regarding their scheduling, advise them to make an appointment with Brian DiUbaldo, high school guidance counselor. Take an active interest in your student's progress in classes. An international student's academic workload can be very demanding, especially during the early stages of English language development

Many students find our habits and mannerisms to be confusing. In many cases, though, they will be afraid to ask for clarification because they do not wish to appear rude or to be embarrassed by the current level of their own language ability.

Homestay families are responsible for informing the School of any changes in the family situation. You must notify the School's Admissions Director, Dr. Chris Bleecker, of any change of residence, change of employment, change of marital status, or any change in the

number of individuals residing in the home. A homestay family also should discuss any significant change in their student's room with the Dr. Bleecker prior to implementing a change. When children of the homestay family reach the age of 18, a criminal record check for them must be turned in to the Program.

If the situation with a student in your home becomes difficult, it is important to inform us so that we might effect a change, either through active support or through a change in the homestay placement. While we do not like to make homestay changes, we also know that we must respect the fact that some relationships just don't work. In some cases, personalities may not mesh. In others, it could be sibling rivalry that is affecting the tone of the house. In still others, pets may be perceived as a problem.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SENSITIVE ISSUES I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

Privacy is essential to the experience of living together. If there is any area of the home that you would not like your student to enter, please make this clear to the student. The student's privacy should also be respected. The student's room should be considered "off limits" to family members and visitors to the home. This is true even if the student is away for a few days. Parents with young children of their own will need to help their children to understand this rule. Of course, cleaning the room is necessary and homestay parents will want to work out an arrangement regarding the times when they will be in the student's room for cleaning.

International students are not expected to be baby sitters or child care providers for the younger children in the home. While this might be an expectation for your own teen child, it is not appropriate for students to perform this duty unless they have offered you assistance in some unique circumstance. They should never miss an event or social opportunity of their own because of this.

At no time is it appropriate for a family member or visitor to even briefly "borrow" possessions (iPods, CDs, clothing, etc.) without

prior approval. Homestay parents should also identify any items in the home which are not to be used by the student and should be clear about the procedures for securing the home and for locking up prized possessions, such as bikes.

Sleepovers are not recommended unless arranged in advance with a conversation between the homestay parents and the sleepover location's parent to confirm the arrangements. It is never acceptable for a student to phone at the last minute and announce he or she will be staying overnight with a friend. Do not accept this type of behavior.

An international student's friends should be close to the same age as them. There is often a problem when a student has "friends who are several years older than them.

WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO US DURING OUR HOMESTAY PARENTING EXPERIENCE?

The School publishes report cards and progress reports several times a year. These will help you to gauge the degree of success that your student is experiencing. Keep in mind that beginning students may not be assigned a mark or will have been given a low initial grade. This should change after the second report. Pay particular attention to the teacher's comments regarding work habits and attendance and contact the student's teachers or the high school guidance counselor, or advisor if you would like to know more. Be sure to attend all parent/teacher conferences and class meetings.





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