



# HOST FAMILY GUIDELINES

Below is an outline of the steps required to get a student placed from the time of the host family's first contact with PEACE until the time of their student's arrival. This process usually takes several weeks, and frequently months. The search for host families is a year-round activity.

Exchange students and their families go through a similar time line in the application, screening, and orientation process before the search for host families begins. They are anxious to hear from us about a host family and school once they've been accepted and have paid their fees.

## HOST PROCESSING TIME LINE

- ◇ STEP 1 Phone screening. Begin database form for tracking. Mail app. Direct to website. Set up home interview date.
- ◇ STEP 2 Host family completes application and gathers photos of family members and home (outside and inside views).
- ◇ STEP 3 Headquarters or Local Coordinator calls school to clear opening and obtain reference check, if possible.
- ◇ STEP 4 Local Coordinator receives telephone screening form of prospective family to review & confirm appointment.
- ◇ STEP 5 Local Coordinator conducts home interview/inspection. May or may not tentatively match a student to family.
- ◇ STEP 6 Local Coordinator sends host application, student acceptance form, and home interview report to office.
- ◇ STEP 7 Headquarters conducts criminal background, employment, pastoral, school, and reference checks on family.
- ◇ STEP 8 Headquarters sends copy of host and student application to school for final approval.
- ◇ STEP 9 School receives papers, reviews and signs enrollment. (*\*time-line varies from 6 hours to 6 months*)
- ◇ STEP 10 Headquarters sends approval notice to host; requests host intro letters to student & parents *via our office*.
- ◇ STEP 11 Headquarters reserves plane ticket, prepares Travel Kit (notice of placement, visa documents, etc.) for student.
- ◇ STEP 12 Office sends Travel Kit including host family letters & pictures to International Representative.
- ◇ STEP 13 International Rep. reviews papers, calls student, and student makes visa interview appointment at US Consul.
- ◇ STEP 14 International Rep. delivers documents, visa app, student ID, manual, and conducts pre-departure orientation.
- ◇ STEP 15 Headquarters forwards flight plans, Host Handbook, and other papers to host family to confirm student arrival.
- ◇ STEP 16 Student is interviewed at U.S. Embassy or Consulate for issuance of Cultural Exchange Visitor Visa.
- ◇ STEP 17 Student and parents phone host family to acknowledge receipt of their letters and to reconfirm travel plans.
- ◇ STEP 18 Student starts packing and says good-bye to family and friends.
- ◇ STEP 19 Student departs country, ready to be greeted by his or her new family; headquarters on standby during travel.
- ◇ STEP 20 Host Family picks up their new international "son" or "daughter" at the airport.
- ◇ STEP 21 Host Parent takes student to school to register, set up schedule, and see if new TB test or vaccination required.
- ◇ STEP 22 Student Counselor phones and Local Coordinator visits to welcome student.

With so many steps in the process and so many things that can and do go wrong, it's essential for all parties to expedite *their* roles. Otherwise, it will not be possible to have time for you to correspond with your student and make a calm and orderly preparation for his or her arrival.

We hope that after seeing all that is involved with placing *each* student with a host family you can better understand why it might seem like forever waiting for news. We simply don't have the time to update *everyone* as each step is completed. But, please feel free to call us for status if you think something is taking too long; and, if you hear news from your school or your student before hearing it from us, please let us know. Good communication is a two-way street.

**In the next section you will find a summary of the most commonly raised questions & concerns to review prior to your student's arrival and for reference throughout the year. For detailed answers or counseling tips refer to your Host Family Handbook or call us.**

*ProAmerican Educational And Cultural Exchange, Inc.*

40 WATER STREET, SUITE 700, NEW PHILADELPHIA, PA 17959 (800) 377-2232

WEBSITE <http://www.peace-inc.org>

EMAIL> [paz@peace-inc.org](mailto:paz@peace-inc.org)

## ARRIVAL PREPARATION

**STUDENT QUARTERS** can be shared, but an extra bed, adequate dresser and closet space are required. For \$99 Lowe's has a ready-to-assemble wardrobe 48 x 92 x 20" with two movable closet rods, and 7 adjustable shelves.

**GOOD HOUSEKEEPING** is a must. The Department of State mandates that students do not live in unsanitary or unsafe conditions. This is an embarrassing reason for us to have to relocate a student. A clean home is a healthy home.

**SCHOOL ENROLLMENT** is handled by PEACE, but occasionally a host parent's assistance is needed. A school is sent the student's personal profile, transcripts, medical records, the host agreement, PEACE local rep and office contacts. No placement is final until the school approval. Host parents must personally take their student to school to register immediately on arrival and may need a new TB test.

**MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS** are required of all PEACE students prior to their departure. You'll get a copy.

**IMMUNIZATIONS** (Polio, MMR, HIV, Varicella) are required prior to entry at all schools. If any required shot has not been given in their home country, this service may be obtained free from your local public assistance office. This is **not covered by student medical insurance!**

**U.S. TRADITIONS**, history, heritage, economic & political systems; social structure, and current events are things your student will ask you about. Prepare to discuss these.

**FLIGHT SCHEDULES** are made by our main office. Host families cannot be notified of arrival itineraries before July, because airlines can't book round-trips sooner than 11 months before the return date. Host families must pick up their student at the airport unless an emergency prevents it. The sending families are required to telephone the host just prior to departure to confirm all flight arrival details. The U.S. State Dept. requires students to have a round trip air ticket and requires PEACE to control student returns.

## FINANCIAL ISSUES

**STUDENT BANKING** should be with a savings account and an ATM card, not checking. Banks must file an IRS Form W8-BEN in lieu of a SS# for ID on the account. Host parents should encourage a budget to help students manage money, **but may not hold or control a student's funds nor have access to his acct pin number.** *The law does not require adult cosigners on minors' accounts. If your bank is belligerent about this call us from the bank.*

**SPENDING MONEY** for personal wants and needs, such as school supplies, clothes, make-up, pictures, souvenirs, entertainment and phone calls are student responsibilities. PEACE recommends that they bring from \$30-40/week for regular spending needs plus \$1000 extra for gifts, emergencies, and special events like ski weekends, school trips, and proms.

***Lending money between students and host family members, or hosts' controlling student bank funds or using their ATM card is strictly forbidden.***

## More Financial Issues

**SCHOOL LUNCHES** should follow the host family's habits. If host parents usually give their own children money for a hot lunch, then they should do the same for their exchange student. If host children bring a bag lunch from home, the exchange student should, too. Anything else the student wishes to buy at school beyond what you can afford should be his or her own responsibility.

**LONG DISTANCE PHONE CALLS** are the student's responsibility. We recommend debit card which pay in advance instead of after a call. PEACE is not responsible for charges the host allows made to their phone. To call direct out of the USA dial 011+ country code + city code + local number. Long distance (00) operator can help you find codes. Get yourself on an international discount plan or you will be OUTRAGEOUSLY overcharged.

**WINTER CLOTHES.** are something your student will not likely have - or need when returning home - if coming from a tropical climate. While a student is expected to have money to purchase these items, you probably can borrow coats from friends or family to help them save money.

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

**ACCIDENT/ SICKNESS INSURANCE**, carried by PEACE on all students for program duration, is NOT TOTAL HEALTH CARE. Besides the basic government required \$50,000 of coverage, PEACE carries an extended major medical up to \$300,000. Additionally, Repatriation and Medical Evacuation expenses are covered in full.

**Not covered: IMMUNIZATIONS, sports physicals, Pre-existing conditions; dental maintenance; eye-glasses; pregnancy; alcohol or narcotic drug related accidents or illness, car accidents if auto insurance pays; high speed or high risk recreational activities, and other named perils excluded on the policy. READ FOR DETAILS.**

Go to our insurance company website site to file a claim. Refer to policy and certificate ID# on claims. Mail form to address on ID card or certificate page in your manual. Call our insurance company (phone # on student medical ID) to learn if a specific activity or risk is covered. This summary is not complete; see policy details.

**AUTHORIZATION TO A TREAT A MINOR FORMS** signed by students' natural parents, plus student medical records are provided to you. *Natural* parents assume responsibility for deductibles, co-payments, excess charges, and non-covered costs on this same form, too.

**Hosts, keep an extra copy of their assumed responsibility in all of your cars. Students should keep their PEACE ID and Health card in their wallet at all times. It includes another proof of insurance and parental authorization.**

This is not the responsibility of PEACE nor is any other cost you may incur by signing a student into a medical facility.

***TO SAVE FUTURE HASSLES DON'T SIGN FOR RESPONSIBILITY. TELL THE HOSPITAL OR DOCTOR YOU ARE NOT COURT APPOINTED GUARDIANS - just hosts.*** Up to 30 days extension can be made at the student's expense if paid in advance.

## PERSONAL ISSUES

**RELIGIOUS** freedom is a cornerstone of American constitution rights. While P.E.A.C.E. families and students are most likely to be active in the practice of their faith, they won't all worship God in the same way or belong to the same denomination.

The foreign exchange student is here to learn American family life, and for better understanding of the things most meaningful to us. For this reason, P.E.A.C.E. expects students to attend the host family's church some of the time, even if it differs from his or her own. Also, church youth groups can be a good way for the student to make friends.

At the same time, P.E.A.C.E. trusts the host family to respect the student's need to worship in a different church, **ESPECIALLY RECEIVING COMMUNION** and therefore, to facilitate the students participation in those services, as well - either with a neighbor or by themselves, if needed.

If you've been M.I.A. Lately we recommend you increase family attendance again. Your student will appreciate it.

**MAKING FRIENDS** should be encouraged quickly in as many ways as possible to alleviate homesickness. Besides school, there are sports clubs, church youth groups, roller rinks, and of course, your neighbors. A word of caution - while exchange students naturally gravitate to each other (out of a common bond), this can backfire and alienate the American kids as potential friends, since your student doesn't know them, their background or habits.

**DATING** can be a sensitive issue. While it can facilitate the students' enjoyment of their time here, it must be with a variety of persons, preferably in groups. The exchange student is here as a goodwill ambassador; steady dating of one person is counterproductive to that end and prohibited.

**ORGANIZED SPORTS** is a great way to make friends and is most effective in breaking down social, ethnic and racial barriers. Participation by your student should, however, be only with the permission of their natural parents and you. Transportation to practices, intrusion into study time, risk of injury, and costs involved should also be discussed.

Sports physicals are not covered by insurance. Nor are all activities. Read your student's brochure for exclusions.

We strongly recommend, and many schools require, extra accident insurance. This cost is the students responsibility.

**DRIVING** an automobile, except in school driver's training classes or with a host parent in the front, is absolutely prohibited for exchange students, even if your student holds an International driver's license. Insurance costs, risks, and liabilities override the convenience to participants. Host are responsible to provide or find students' local transportation.

**EMPLOYMENT** is discouraged, but allowed by the Dept. of State, up to 10 hours/wk. in noncompetitive jobs such as baby-sitting, cutting grass, etc. They do not need a SS# for this type of work. Interaction with family and school is our primary objective; steady work may interfere with this.

**EXCESSIVE E-MAIL, LETTERS & PHONE CALLS**, will make a student's adjustment into the new culture and environment difficult, if not impossible. Advise us if this is a problem so that our International staff can counsel tactfully from the other end. The bond between host family and student is diluted and disrupted by too much contact from home. Once every two weeks is recommended. E-mail, chat room, instant messenger, MySpace, Facebook, etc. is restricted to two hours per week, one day a week to force their attention the other six days to where they live & the people they live with. Personal cell phones and laptops are banned until Christmas vacation, except used under parental supervision.

**VISITS** from natural family & friends are prohibited during the first three months, and are recommended to delay until during long school breaks or at the end of the school year. Visits should preferably be made at the invitation of the host family. Students may not travel with natural parents during mid-year reunions without at least one host family member invited to participate. This also applies to visiting other exchange students, especially those related or from their same hometown. Solo visits from boy/girlfriends are proven to be problematic and, therefore, are absolutely prohibited.

## TRAVEL ISSUES

Students may travel with their host family for day trips without notifying PEACE but we are responsible to their parents and the U.S. State Department to be able to reach all students at all times. Please give your local coordinator or our headquarters a phone number to reach you, if you go off overnight.

- Students must never walk or ride anywhere locally away from their host family home without the host's permission.
- Students may not travel out of the local area without their host family except in PEACE-approved, adult-supervised, group activities or with mature American adults tied to the host family or known by them in the host community. (not relatives or friends of the exchange student's family).
- Independent touring is always prohibited—even taking a tour bus or train to meet an adult chaperoned group.
- Students may also not travel alone to visit relatives or countrymen residing in the U.S. except after the school year while en route home, and then only if and when approved by P.E.A.C.E. under State Department criteria.
- Students may not travel home or to any other destination to rendezvous with relatives during the Christmas season or any other time of the year. It is a key part of the cultural experience to spend holidays with the host family.
- To visit Canada, go to their website and find the list of countries needing a visa. Some Europeans don't need a visa but many do. All students must have their passport, DS-2019, I-94, and student ID card to enter. Without all papers they will be denied reentry! A Private school student may have an I-20 instead of DS2019. Same rules.
- Host families should be sure their student keeps passport and travel documents in a safe place where they won't get lost, (like their suitcase) but you may not hold them.
- Overweight luggage (51 lbs) -or- more than 3 pieces will cost extra money. Plan ahead for this. Make your student hold back at least \$100 or more for these penalties.

## FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

**HOUSEHOLD RULES** must be addressed right away. Your student did not grow up in your house, nor even your community, so cannot know what is expected. You must treat him as a family member, not as a guest or boarder.

In this respect, assign the same curfew, dinner schedules, laundry routines, and chores as you do your own same age children. If you make exceptions - too strict or too lenient - it will cause resentment by either your own children or your exchange student.

Clarify the ramifications of failure to comply with your rules but don't punish any offense until you've confirmed that they understand.

**MAIDS** are taken for granted in many Latin American households. While most students may need training with "domestic appliances", they will quickly adapt to being expected to make their bed, clean their room and do their own laundry. This gives them a feeling of responsibility.

## DISCIPLINE & CONDUCT

**SMOKING** is not allowed under any circumstance. Defiant, repeated use may result in a student's dismissal.

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** may not be consumed, except when part of a host family dinner/celebration, such as a wedding. Illegal, alcohol abuse may result in dismissal.

**RECREATIONAL DRUG USE** and/or distribution is cause for immediate dismissal from the program *and deportation*.

**PREMARITAL SEX** will not be tolerated during participation in the program. Sexual misconduct (with or without pregnancy occurring), including viewing or distributing pornography or making sexually degrading remarks or overtures to others, is cause for immediate dismissal and return home. **MARRIAGE** is also not allowed during participation, nor may married students enroll in the program.

**THEFT, SHOPLIFTING, VANDALISM, FIGHTING** or any other lawbreaking is cause for immediate dismissal from the program. We will, of course, assist in any way we can to obtain the student's freedom and dropping of formal charges, while enforcing restitution to the victim.

**PROBLEMS** should always be discussed privately (among the family) but openly. Many forms of behavior are a result of (1) failure to understand a request or order, (2) failure to get the meaning of a phrase or word - even getting it backwards, or (3) culturally different habits. Being exhausted from translating all day at school in the first few months often is mistaken for laziness.

**COUNSELING** is only a phone call away with either your local representative or our central office counselors. But remember: we can't help what we don't know about - and there are no stupid questions. Extreme consequences as noted above are rarely necessary and never desired, but can only be prevented by early warning and intervention.

## LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY

Most exchange students come with varying competencies in English, but all initially appear to know less than they actually do. This is due to listening speed being at classroom level (less than conversational). Just as foreign speech seems inordinately fast to us when they first arrive ours seem equally fast to them. But as a student begins to relax and becomes acclimated to his new surroundings—and pressures lessen—you will notice rapid progress.

Students are here to perfect their English skills; so, don't be embarrassed to correct their grammar or pronunciation. They want it. If you are fluent in their language don't use it with them in daily conversation. Discourage contact with native speakers of their language, but it's okay for them to teach you a few words and phrases or for your kids to practice if they are studying it in school. This will not hurt.

## RISKS

### UNREALISTIC GOALS

- To learn fluent Spanish from your student
- To gain a super role model for your children
- To improve your children's social standing
- To become your child's or your own best friend
- To secure domestic help with small children
- To obtain a farmhand, housekeeper, or other laborer

**SIBLING RIVALRY** is normal in all families with children. You will have to be sensitive to both your own children's and your student's needs and feelings. Personal attention, favors, and discipline must be dispensed evenhandedly. This should be discussed openly both before and after your student arrives. Your children will have to share their space, their things, their time, and their parents' attention.

**RELOCATION** happens to 20% of all placements. This may be due to sudden job loss, medical emergency, or failure of the host and student to get along well. Our concern for both host and student sometimes necessitates a move if problems cannot be resolved within a reasonable time. This is not an endurance test. Like a marriage or a business partnership, it takes work to make it work; but 80% success-ratio is pretty good odds for any venture.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

**EXPECTATIONS** cannot be fairly anticipated from the experiences of others - good, bad or mediocre. Each is unique. Expect a full range of emotions from everyone - anger & joy, disappointment & pride, sorrow & elation. *But if your focus is on making this a great experience for your student more than for your family expect to receive both!*

**NOBUDDY'S PERFECT!** Industry studies show that at varying times of the year most families experienced some difficulties, but nearly all report having had an enriching and worthwhile experience overall.

We hope you have a great year!