





Northwest Christian High School International Student & Host Parent Handbook

Northwest Christian's International Student Program is designed for students around the world who want to have an educational and cultural experience. By attending NCHS and living with an American family, students practice their English, make American teenaged friends, and gain first-hand knowledge of United States customs and traditions. Many international students will continue on to American colleges and universities from here.

Students accepted into our program have successfully completed the application process. Clear expectations are communicated for applicants to:

- Speak as much English as possible with their host families
- Participate with and try to understand daily family life in the United States
- Share aspects of their culture
- Work hard at school
- Participate in school, community and church activities

“Developing Christian Leaders”

The mission of Northwest Christian Schools is to provide a Christ-centered environment with a superior education that prepares students to have a positive impact in our world for Him.

NCHS OFFICE CONTACTS

Director of International Students	Mrs. Diana Downey
Principal	Mr. Kevin Schwoch
Student Activities	Mrs. Jeanette Lindstrom
Athletic Administrator	Mr. Mark Smith
Family Liaison	Mrs. Holly Cline

Important Contact Information

4710 Park Center Ave NE Lacey, WA 98516
Phone (360) 491-2966 FAX (360) 491-3086
Website: www.nchs-nchs-olympia.org

Email:



International Student

DRIVERS LICENSE

After careful consideration and discussion with natural parents, as well as host parents, international students may obtain an American driver's license if they meet the following criteria:

- Written permission form completed (see Mrs. Downey)
- Complete the Host Family Agreement form to participate in Driver's Education and submit it to the International Director.
- Successfully complete a Washington State certified driver training course and submit a copy of completion certificate to the International Director.
- Obtain car insurance coverage either through your parent's policy or your own. Proof of insurance must be submitted to the International Director. See the International Driving policy guidelines for details.
- Please see the NCHS International Driving policy guidelines for more detailed information. Forms are available in Mrs. Downey's office.

Host Family

WELCOME

Welcome to the NCHS International Student Program. The purpose of this handbook is to help you prepare for hosting an international student and help your student adjust to life in America. Thank you for welcoming an international student into your home and family.

EXPECTATIONS

Have realistic expectations about hosting an international student. While your student may want to be involved in some family activities, don't expect they will want to be with you all the time. Just like an American teenager, your host student will want time alone in their room and with their friends.

Your student's room should be ready for them when they arrive. It is required to provide a private room unless the student is willing to share accommodations. A separate bed, desk and dresser should be provided.

You should treat your host student as you would your own child. Help your host student feel welcome as a family member, not a guest.

Host Family

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to a happy experience for both the student and your family. However, not all communication is verbal. Gestures and facial expressions are extremely important. Your student may nod or say “yes” just to be polite, despite not understanding what you are saying. You may be able to tell from a facial expression when your message is not getting through. Try to be sensitive to these cues. If the lack of language skills is a hindrance, please call for help.

Some helpful hints to make communication easier:

- *Speak slowly and use simple words.*
- *If they don't understand, try using different words.*
- *If accent or pronunciation is getting in the way, try writing words down. Often a student's reading and writing ability is better than their speaking and listening ability.*
- *Pay attention to non-verbal cues.*

Helpful Hint: Americans say “thank you” a lot. Few other cultures say “thank you” as much as we do. If you need to hear “thanks” more often, you may need to ask for it. It could be the beginning of an interesting discussion.

International Student

TATTOOS, PIERCINGS AND BODY MODIFICATION

No tattoos, piercings or body modifications may be made in the United States. Students over age 18 may have a visible permanent tattoo but it must be obtained in their home country. In addition, all piercings or body modifications must be obtained in the home country.

RIDING IN A VEHICLE WITH YOUR FRIENDS

International students should not ride with other teenagers.

Statistically, chances are very high that a teenage driver will have an injury-causing accident. It is discouraged for international students to ride in cars with drivers under the age of 23

Students who take it upon themselves to ride with another teenage driver without the knowledge or without written liability release of their natural parents are taking responsibility for potential injury and liability.

TRIPS

For all trips you **must** complete the **Travel Form** and file it with the International Student Director one week prior to your departure. You must have an adult over the age of 23 with you that your host parents have met and trust when you leave the greater Olympia area. For all overnight trips out of the city of Olympia, the student must have submitted a Travel Form with emergency contact information prior to their departure. In addition, your agent may require travel permission to leave the Olympia area.

International Student

Students must dress modestly and appropriately at all times.

Hairstyles and fashion should avoid extremes.

- Footwear must be worn at all times.
- For Physical Education, sports shoes and socks are the only appropriate foot wear.
- Pants/Shorts must be worn at or above the hip bones.
- Tears or holes (distressing) may only appear at or below fingertip length.
- Shorts must be be fingertip length or longer.
- Tops must be long enough that when the arms are fully extended and raised overhead, the midriff is not exposed.
- Sleeveless shirts must be at least 3 finger widths on the shoulder. No undergarments (or portions of undergarments) or excessive skin (front, side, midriff, or back) may be showing.
- Clothing design logos or endorsements of products may not refer to or infer gambling, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, foul language, sex, violence, secular music and/or negative mass media.
- Hair must be a natural color.
- Hats, hoods, and/or sunglasses should not be worn in class or chapel.
- Earrings may be worn in ears (no plugs allowed).
- In compliance with Washington Code §26.28.085 no minors, under age 18, may have visible permanent tattoos.

Specifics for Gentlemen

- Acceptable dress includes: shoes, long pants or loose-fitting shorts, warm-ups and shirts - all in accordance with the guidelines above.

Specifics for Ladies

- Acceptable dress includes: shoes, skirts/dresses (no shorter than 3" above the knee), pants or loose-fitting shorts, warm-ups and shirts - all in accordance with the guidelines above.
- Small studs may be worn in the nose. No other facial piercings, including tongue.
- Leggings are permitted when worn with a dress, skirt, or shirt no shorter than fingertip length.

Please see the school handbook for further details and the Enforcement Policy.

Host Family

STUDENT ARRIVALS

Our students typically arrive at SeaTac International Airport after traveling for 13-24 hours. They might have missed a night of sleep, and their biological clocks will be in the wrong time zone.

We encourage host families to pick up their students at the airport. It is helpful if you bring a sign with their name printed boldly to welcome them.

As you can imagine, they will be very tired and usually quite nervous when they finally arrive. They will know by your smile and warm greeting that you are happy to see them. Because they are tired, even those with good English skills may have some trouble communicating at first. By speaking slowly and simply, not going into too many details, you will help them relax. For the first few days you may want to keep your schedule simple while your host student adjusts.

HELPING YOUR STUDENT ADJUST

If possible, schedule a family meeting for the day after your student's arrival. At this meeting, you can discuss your family's rules, expectations, etc. The more information you can give your student about how to fit into your family, the easier it will be for him or her to adjust to your home.

Repeat this experience once your student is better adjusted to their new environment.

Host Family

HELPING YOUR STUDENT ADJUST

During the first week, your student may need to establish a banking account, go to the post office, find a pharmacy and buy some school supplies or a cell phone. Plan to take them with you when you run errands.

Be sure that your student always has your address and telephone number with them. Print it out for them and tell them to put it in their wallet or cell phone.

CHORES

Please treat your student like you would your own children—require the same rules and responsibilities. They should not get special treatment beyond the patience required to communicate, but neither should they be required to do things that you wouldn't ask of your own children. Being on their own in this country, they need your advice and guidance.

LAUNDRY

Tell your student how you expect them to handle their laundry. If you expect your student to do their laundry, you may have to teach them how to use the washer and dryer. If you are going to do the laundry for your student, tell them where to put their clothes. Some students may hesitate to give you their personal clothing items.

International Student

TARDINESS AND ABSENCES

It is important to your education to attend classes and not be tardy. A third tardy violation will result in an unexcused absence. These violations are per class and the student may incur more than one violation on a single day. Tardy violations begin accruing at the beginning of each semester, and are accumulated throughout the semester.

Students must make up work missed due to absence according to the class syllabuses. Ten absences per semester may result in "no credit", and may require additional work to be completed or class(es) to be retaken when next offered. Student absences must be called in by 8:25am. Absences for appointments must be reported to the office upon departure and return to campus.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones brought on campus must remain in lockers or backpacks, not to be seen or heard in the classroom. Some teachers will allow the use of a cell phone for research in the classroom. Please ask permission from the teacher prior to using your cell phone in the classroom.

DRESS CODE

Host parents are responsible for their student attending school in appropriate clothing. If parents or students question whether an item of clothing is appropriate for school, it is then advisable that the student not wear that item (when, in doubt, don't).

International Student

ASSISTANCE vs INDEPENDENCE

The International Director is here to help you. You are always welcome in the International office.

All of these people desire your success, this is why they have chosen to be involved in your life. You may build trust in them, as well as allow them to build trust in you. As you learn to rely on others you will find the tools necessary for independence.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LANGUAGE POLICY

As an international student you are here to learn and use the English language. All international students are required to speak English only while in the classroom during school hours (8:30am-3:30pm). Should an international student actively speak their native language in a classroom, without prior permission from a staff member for that particular moment, a work detention will be issued.

SMOKING AND DRINKING

The use of tobacco and/or alcohol by students either on or off campus will result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

While it is more common for teenagers of other countries to smoke by the age of 15 or 16, smoking in America is illegal under the age of 18. In America the consumption of alcohol is illegal under the age of 21.

Students should **never** be in situations where illegal drugs are offered. Should you become involved in illegal drug-use, you would be immediately expelled from the program and sent back home.

Host Family

SPENDING MONEY

Students will have their own money to pay for personal expenses which should cover the cost of clothing, personal care products, going out with friends, school activities, etc. Your student should pay for their own long distance phone calls. Most students will have a cell phone that will enable them to call home at a reduced rate. International students are advised to bring at least \$200.00 per month in spending money.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

All international students are encouraged but not required to attend one church meeting per week. They are encouraged to also become involved in their church youth group. Students who would like to attend a church of their own nationality may do so, at the convenience of the host family.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Participating in the daily activities of your family will help your student develop an appreciation for North American life. They will learn a lot from sharing in your everyday experience whether they are doing chores with your children, going on errands, or sitting in the backyard talking to the neighbors. This is the way they will come to understand real life and real people in the United States. Take them with you to the grocery store. Ask them to choose some foods they especially like.

Host Family

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Strongly encourage your student to take part in church youth group and NCHS activities. Hesitation on their part may be due to cultural politeness, lack of understanding, or not knowing what to expect, not because they really don't want to participate. In some cultures, it is polite to say "no" the first time something is offered. Some students may say, "no thank you" as a "safe" answer if they don't fully understand what you are asking.

TRAVEL FORMS

Due to immigration policies it is necessary to know where your student is and who they are with at all times. When the student is travelling out of the city of Olympia/Lacey overnight they must file a Travel Form (available from the International Director). If the student is not travelling with you, they must be with an adult aged 23 or older for liability purposes. Students may not be left without adult supervision overnight. As you would with your own children, be sure this person is someone you know and trust. Students may want to stay with a friend or another host family in the case of your absence. Please advise the International Student Director if your student plans to stay with a friend overnight.

International Student

WELCOME TO AMERICA AND NCHS

Welcome to Northwest Christian High School! We are pleased that you have chosen to continue your educational pursuits here in Washington State. Much of your success will depend on you. However, that does not mean you must do it all alone. There are many people strategically placed in your life to help you reach your goals. Those students who take advantage of the help available from their host parents, teachers, and the International Director will find their time here much more successful. Be sure to read the NCHS Handbook, available on the NCHS website, so that you know the policies and rules that govern your education. There may also be sections in the host family pages you should know; discuss those with your host parents as well.

ASSISTANCE vs INDEPENDENCE

As an international student there is a temptation to believe you must take care of everything on your own. However, this is not the true definition of independence. Independence comes from knowing when you need help and seeking help from competent, knowledgeable sources.

Your host parents are your first source of help regarding the American way of life. For example, locating banking, shopping, medical, and safe places for entertainment are all areas where you will need their assistance. Your teachers are the first source of help for the classes in which you are enrolled. The International Director is the source of help for all other issues, or when you don't know who to ask for help.

Host Family

Your student's school file will contain a medical release form signed by the student's parents. In case of any sickness or accident, please do exactly as you would for your own son or daughter. If there is a serious problem, call 911 and/or transport them to the nearest hospital. **Do not** sign any financial responsibility forms for the student or the medical facility may hold you personally responsible for all medical costs. Be aware that the medical providers may try to insist that you sign financial forms to provide treatment. Provide a copy of the student's health insurance and explain that you are not the biological parent and that the student is staying at your home temporarily. Please contact the ISP Director or the school as soon as practical so our office can contact the parents or assist with talking to medical providers.

YOUR STUDENT'S DEPARTURE

All students return to their home country for summer break. Some students will return home for Christmas break or spring break. Please encourage your student to communicate travel plans with you in advance. Students will often make travel plans without discussing the dates with you in advance and expect that you will be available to take them to the airport. Communication is key to help avoid time conflicts. Before your student leaves for the summer you may want to discuss their plans to return in the fall. Request that your student include you in their travel plans so you can arrange to welcome them back when they return.

Host Family

COMPUTER USE

If you own a personal computer, you may allow your student to use the computer for playing games, writing letters or email. To protect your data, we suggest that you not allow your student to download and install any programs from discs or from the internet. To be sure that your student does not accidentally damage your files, we recommend that you back up your computer prior to your student's arrival. **It is important and absolutely appropriate to have a filtered internet provider or accountability program to prevent any undesirable internet activity.**

Many students bring or buy their own computers. We strongly suggest that students are limited in their internet use. The goal is for the student to spend time bonding with the host family and not on the computer with their natural family and friends from their country. Realistic time limits or curfew might include no computer time after 10:00pm or no more than 3 hours usage per night, with the understanding that research projects and word processing are required for many classes and may require extra time.

MEDICAL AND INSURANCE

All students are required to have a medical insurance policy. Please ask your student for a copy for your records. Eye, dental care and sports physicals are typically not included in this coverage. Medical care can be obtained at a walk in clinic.