



# SPARTANBURG CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

## Mission Statement

Students are well-educated, equipped with a biblical worldview, and exhibit a heart for Christ.

## Important Information

School website: [www.scawarriors.org](http://www.scawarriors.org)

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## Introduction

Spartanburg Christian Academy is excited to be able to partner with you in the educational and spiritual endeavor of serving as a homestay family for an international student. It is our prayer that God will work through the relationship you will share with your international student to minister to both your family and the student you are hosting. We desire for the homestay family experience to be a positive and encouraging time in the life of your family as well as the life of the international student you are hosting. We know that many of our students' most vibrant memories will be of the time they spent with members of their American homestay family. This handbook has been compiled in order to provide you with easy access to the necessary information for participation in this program. Please read this handbook carefully and let me know if you have any questions or concerns. It is a joy to work with you in this endeavor.

## Goals of the Homestay Family

The primary goal of the Homestay Family is to provide a home environment for international students that will enrich and support the mission of the school through a Christ-centered, loving and supportive family experience.

Spartanburg Christian Academy seeks to accept international students from around the world and a variety of cultures. However, most of our international students come primarily from China. These students come mainly for the purpose of improving English skills with the goal of obtaining admittance into a college or university in the United States. The best way for students to attain this objective is through immersion in an English-speaking home environment as well as through the daily study of academic disciplines in English. Living with an American homestay family also enables our international students to gain first-hand cultural understanding. This responsibility does demand time and attention and should not be taken lightly. Please ensure that your family and personal schedules allow the time it will take to invest in the life of the student in order to meet these goals.

Your international student may not be a Christian, but has chosen to study at SCA with the full awareness that he or she will be living with a Christian homestay family and studying in a Christian school. Your student understands that he or she is expected to attend all church functions with your family. Please be mindful and respectful of your student's viewpoints as you live the Christian life before them. It is our prayer that through the experiences the student will share with your family, the Holy Spirit will guide him or her to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. However, it may still take many years before your student will come to fully grasp what it really means to become and live as a Christian.

Your student may agree with what you say so as not to offend you, but that may not reflect an actual understanding of what you are saying and expecting of him or her. The promotion of a long-term relationship is built on a trust where questions can be freely asked and answered without a sense of condemnation. This is very important to reach the heart of an international student who does not come from a Christian background. Our desire is that through your interaction as a homestay family with your international student, his or her life will be changed forever by the power of the Gospel.

Consider the following:

“Most people don't understand how much time it takes for folks out of a totalitarian system to be deprogrammed from the old way of thinking before they can even be in the position to have categories in which to consider the Gospel.” Dr. Pete Kuzmic

“A worldview change is needed, and to change worldview, you have to face culture's impact on you. You have to ask questions of your worldview and allow truth to go deeply in. If not, conversion will be shallow and won't be transformative.” Rev. Edwin Su

# Characteristics and Core Responsibilities of Host Families

## Characteristics of Host Families

- 1. BIBLICAL PARENTING:** Host families have a growing relationship with God and are a Biblically guided home. They are able to demonstrate a healthy marriage and parenting role. They are able to help their international student identify and develop his/her gifts.
- 2. FINANCIAL SOLVENCY:** Host families would describe their family as having solvent finances and they provide a comfortable home setting for their international student.
- 3. OPENNESS TO GROWTH:** Host families see value in various styles of parenting. They are flexible in how they parent as they get to know their student. They are open to input from the school regarding methods of parenting and advising their boarding student. Host families consistently attend host family meetings with the attitude of wanting to grow and improve and wanting to help others grow and improve.
- 4. ABLE TO RESOLVE CONFLICT:** Host families resolve conflict appropriately, quickly addressing inappropriate behavior without lingering anger or resentment. They model repentance and admit if they make a mistake.
- 5. ABLE TO GIVE EMOTIONAL AND CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT SUPPORT:** Host families commit to provide emotional and spiritual support to our students. They understand that, in addition to the normal ups and downs of the teenage years, their student is also working through cultural adjustments and related identity concerns. The host family has committed to learn about their student's home culture in a respectful manner.
- 6. AGREEMENT TO SCHOOL HOMESTAY PHILOSOPHIES:** Host families have thoroughly read and understand school distinctives and residence life philosophies in the Host Family Handbook. They are able to maintain standards in the home that fall within the school's acceptable range, to insure consistency and positive student morale. Further, they commit to positively supporting the home environment of other host families on the team, carefully building up other host homes if comparisons are made in conversation.

## Core Responsibilities of Host Families

- 1. PROVISION OF RIDES:** Host families provide rides for their student so he or she is able to do after school activities. Families who live further from campus will need to consider the whole family's plans as rides are requested. The international student should ask for rides with reasonable notice.
- 2. PROVISION OF FOOD:** Host families arrange for a shelf in the cupboard for foods their student likes and that are healthy. Host families have made arrangements to visit the ethnic food store once a month to "stock up". Host families are expected to eat a cooked meal together as a family at least 3 times a week.
- 3. PARENTING USE OF TECHNOLOGY:** Host families ensure that their student has a working cell phone that can be reached anytime by dialing a US domestic phone number. They ensure their student adds minutes on time each month (if necessary). Laptops, phones, and other devices are stored on the first floor of the home at all times, in a public area.
- 4. COMMUNICATION:** Host families regularly communicate with short, written updates and photos with the parents in the home country and see themselves as co-parents to their international student. Host families complete residence life reports in a timely manner. The host family addresses issues as they arise with the student, seeking guidance from the International Homestay Director, as necessary.
- 5. INDIVIDUAL CONNECTION:** Host families will have weekly meetings to address family and student needs. The host parent also connects one-on-one with their international student to personally encourage, challenge, and pray for their student according to what is going on in their life that week.

**6. ACADEMIC HELP:** Host families will assist international students with academic studies, as needed.

## Preparation

Many students from other countries dream of the opportunity to experience the United States. The importance of foreign languages in their education, especially English, helps to explain their desire to study here. Parents often arrange for their children to have experiences in other countries with the belief that those opportunities are valuable for their growth and enrichment. The purpose of our program is to help these students discover American life by becoming a member of an American family for the school year.

This handbook will help you to be aware of some of the adjustments that you and your student will face and the things you and your family can do to help. Please encourage each member of your family to read or become familiar with the handbook and to be involved in welcoming your student into your home. It is very important that the decision to host a student involve your whole family. Learning more about your student and his or her home country in advance can help relieve anxiety and the uneasiness of the unknown. It will also help enlarge your perspective on the world and its people.

Please understand, however, that no handbook will eliminate surprises. This homestay experience will be an adventure for you and your student! Expectations should be realistic and you should be prepared to make some adjustments. Some students are more outgoing than others, some will adjust more quickly and readily than others, and some will have a greater ability to communicate than others. Openness and understanding will be essential to bring out the best in each individual student. SCA's International Homestay Program Coordinator will be a ready resource available to advise and support the host family.

As a family, you will experience various stages throughout your hosting experience:

- **Arrival:** You may feel like you have a stranger in your home for a while. The transition from guest to family member may require time and patience. You will need to be the initiator and take the steps to draw your international student into your family.
- **Settling In:** Don't feel like you must constantly "entertain" your student, but do include him or her in family activities and help him or her to understand and follow your family rules. Helping with meal preparation and clean-up, participation in family gatherings and Sunday worship should be expected of your international student.
- **Establish a Meaningful Relationship:** After the initial stages, more sharing will take place. You will hopefully feel that you have gained a new son or daughter while enjoying the learning experience. Just as with your own children, there will be seasons of fun, conversation, story-sharing, conflict, and resolution with your international student.
- **Departure:** You may feel a sense of loss when your student leaves. However, the relationship you developed can still grow long-distance.

## Welcome Correspondence:

At this point you should have received contact information for your student. Email a letter of welcome as soon as possible introducing your family members and describing your community. Be sure to include:

- Any special things your student might want to pack (e.g. types of clothing necessary because of your plans or climate).

- Any special information you might want your student to know.
- A note of welcome from each member of the family.
- Once you have sent an initial email or letter, you may want to set up a time for your whole family to talk over Skype with your international student and their family. Many families have found this to be an exciting way to get to know each other prior to the student's arrival.

## **Arrival**

Hosting an international student is truly a ministry – an opportunity to share Christ's love in your own home. Friendship evangelism is our main purpose and goal. Please pray for your student before they arrive and always be ready to give an answer regarding your faith.

- All students are requested to fly into a local airport. Please greet your student on arrival at the airport with balloons, flowers, or a sign to make them feel welcome. Students should not be left alone on the day they arrive.
- Remember that your student has likely had a long flight and may have traveled some distance before even boarding the plane, so don't expect too much at first. A lot of rest will be needed to compensate for jet lag.
- The natural parents will be anxious to receive news of their child's arrival, so allow time for your student to contact his or her parents.
- Once at home, it is important for you to show your student around the house and note any off-limit areas. Let them know where they can store their belongings.
- Students are not permitted to have personal TVs or DVD players in their bedroom; laptops are permitted. Please help your student connect to a local server. Internet access should be filtered and used in a public place if at all possible. If used in the bedroom, please monitor your student appropriately. Most students will bring their own laptop; others may need to use the home computer for word processing. Students will most likely need to use the home printer for printing school assignments. Please discuss computer time and use and location of the computer with your student. Our student guidelines suggest 30 minutes-1 hour of internet time, at most, unless a special project or permission is given.
- When your student arrives set reasonable guidelines for bathroom usage that fits your family schedule. Make sure you discuss disposal of feminine products with female students. Please be sure to demonstrate how to use your bathroom fixtures, shower, and any unusual features of their room or your house.
- Bedroom doors should remain open, however family members (adults and children) should always knock and receive permission before entering their bedroom. Allowing the student personal privacy is important. Feel free to check your student's room with their permission and the student present.
- Shortly after your student arrives show them how to use 911 in case of an emergency. Also, provide a list of important numbers for your student to enter in their cell phone. These should include your phone numbers; the numbers of your children, if they have a cell phone; the number for the International Homestay Coordinator, and a neighbor or friend in case of emergency.
- A Family Covenant with written rules for your home is required. Revisit during the year, as necessary.

## **Welcoming Your Student into Your Home and Community**

Help your student to feel at home with your family, welcoming him or her as another son or daughter, brother or sister. Foster positive attitudes from the beginning and try to provide a friendly, warm environment that will stimulate meaningful relationships.

- Let everyone know you have a special visitor. Neighbors, friends, and relatives can help to expand impressions of American life and make the stay even more enriching.
- Help your student become familiar with their new surroundings.
- Point out things and places to be aware of, and encourage full participation as a member of your family.

If you have a child in high school, we suggest that your child take an active role in introducing your international student to friends, family, church, and students at SCA. This does not mean they have to be with your student all the time, just make an effort to introduce them to students their own age.

If you do not have a child in high school, we recommend that you introduce your student to other teenagers in your circle of friends and encourage those teenagers to help introduce them to their friends. The International Homestay Coordinator will take an active role in helping your student assimilate into the SCA culture as well.

### **Relations With Family Abroad**

Our greatest hope is that this experience will provide you with the opportunity to develop a lasting friendship, not only with your student, but with your student's family as well. We encourage you to email or write a note, pictures are always nice, to the parents of your student once a month during the stay; writing in English is fine. The natural parents would be delighted to hear from you and will find a way to have your letter translated, if necessary. Encourage our student to contact their families to share with them all that they are experiencing.

### **Language in the Home**

We require all homestay families to speak English. Families who are not native to the United States and speak English as a second language may serve as homestay families, but English must be the primary language spoken in the home, and the English spoken in the home must be near-native fluency.

### **Integration**

Encourage and help your student to become involved in conversation and activities. They may not take the initiative because of language difficulty or because they may not be sure what you expect of them. Following are some ways that you can help your student integrate into your family.

- Provide each student with a private bedroom. Our goal is to have only one student per homestay family, though exceptions to this may occur given the willingness of the homestay family and the approval of the International Homestay Program Coordinator. When this occurs, we will always attempt to mix nationalities of students to avoid having two students in the same home who speak the same language. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the International Homestay Program Coordinator.
- The student's bedroom furnishings should include a bed (excluding futon), dresser, closet, night table, and good lighting for study. Your student will feel much more at home if they do not have to live out of a suitcase.
- A desk and chair in the student's bedroom provide a quiet study area, but are not required in the student's bedroom. However, a study area that offers a quiet work space must be provided elsewhere in the home. The student should also be provided access to all common areas of the home (kitchen, living room, family room, etc.).
- Provide your student with clean linens and towels once or twice per week, depending on the exchange pattern in your home.

- A bathroom may be private or shared with others in the home. If many members of the family are using a shared bathroom, it may be a good idea to post a schedule of grooming time/showers/baths, etc.
- Companionship with the family is a primary component of the international experience. Try to not leave your student alone for extended periods of time. If everyone in your family needs to be gone for a certain part of the day, make other arrangements for your student during that time and/or identify someone who can be responsible for them during your absence. **Under no circumstances should your student be left alone overnight without a responsible adult present.**
- If the student asks to stay with another family overnight, please make sure you talk with the other student's parents to make arrangements. If the stay will be for more than one night, please call the International Homestay Program Coordinator for approval ahead of time.
- Orient the student to your neighborhood, including things such as banking locations and procedures, nearby stores and recreation facilities.
- Help the student understand any emergency procedures (e.g. fire, inclement weather, etc.)

Try to understand that the “normal” way of doing things in America is not always the same as in other parts of the world. Good manners, proper behavior, and family rules may vary depending on the culture. For example, some students may not know that the shower curtain should be kept inside the bathtub when showering. In some other cultures, students are often used to keeping the doors inside their homes closed at all times. Be aware that American hygiene habits may be different from those of other cultures. Please help your student adjust to American hygiene habits such as length of shower, frequency of showers, use of soap, shampoo, and deodorant, and laundry schedules. It is not uncommon for students to wear the same outfit for more than one day. Discussing the differences as you help your student understand American culture will be one of the enriching aspects of this experience.

While it is expected that your international student will need to adapt to your family, also remember that your own children may need to adapt to their new sister or brother. Your own children might feel left out at times, and it is normal for them to be frustrated with the extra attention you may be giving your international student. To help cope with this:

- Let your children know that you understand what is bothering them. Show that you care by asking their opinions and including them in making plans.
- Don't ask your children to make too many sacrifices for the student. You might want to consider making alternate plans for your student (with friends, for example) and do something alone with your children at times during your student's stay.

If there are other international students in your neighborhood, it is recommended that no great effort be made to bring them into **daily** contact with each other. Too much time with friends from abroad may hinder their integration with their host families. The time your student spends living in your home and community should be an **American** experience! You are, however, encouraged to call other host families in your area to arrange get-togethers. The International Homestay Program Coordinator will also arrange events and outings for students.

### **Adjustments**

Generalities do not often help people to understand each other, and you are asked to be conscious of the fact that there are significant differences between cultures. Children from other countries are brought up differently from American children. Sometimes students act on the basis of impressions they have received from television

and movies about life in the United States. America may still be, for them, a land of dreams and adventure and it is difficult for them to have a clear idea of what life here is really like before they personally discover it.

They have usually learned that American people are “relaxed” and they sometimes interpret this to mean that we don’t care about rules. They may have a confused picture of shifting social patterns and freedoms and may not realize that many American families are basically quite conservative.

For example, although while the students are told to bring along dress clothes as well as casual clothes, once in a while they arrive with nothing but jeans because they are convinced that Americans only wear jeans. (While emailing your student, or over Skype, please indicate the need to bring dress clothes if there is going to be a special occasion to attend.)

It will be interesting to discover the impressions your student has about America and the changes in attitudes that develop during the stay for your family as well as the student. You are encouraged to:

- Talk about the differences in culture, remembering that each country has special qualities and “different” does not constitute bad or wrong or abnormal. One’s perspective is relative to one’s background and upbringing.
- Enjoy the observation of these differences rather than comparing them judgmentally.

The following sections on family life and social life are meant to help you understand the background of your student. You shouldn’t change your schedule or habits, but it is hoped an awareness of what your student may be used to will make it easier for you to help your student adapt to your family’s lifestyle.

### **Family Life**

Families in many other countries are traditionally close-knit. A lot of time is spent together as a family and parents assume a great deal of responsibility for teaching their children to become responsible adults. Children are often brought up under careful discipline and are taught to think and reason in an orderly and philosophical manner. In the United States people seem to focus on the importance of youth, while many other cultures tend to focus on the importance of becoming a mature adult (the French and Spanish languages have no word for teenager). Whereas, we encourage children to express themselves, children in other countries may be taught to speak to adults only when spoken to, to contribute intelligently, and not to monopolize conversation. They are taught to be individuals and to spend a certain amount of time alone in their rooms, doors closed, for reading or writing.

Your student may feel uncomfortable or uncertain about how to address you; “Mother” and/or “Father” or some other colloquial term of endearment. Discuss the situation and try to reach a mutual agreement early on and insist that they call you by that name. Otherwise, the student may avoid addressing you by any name at all.

Your customs and behavior patterns will all be very new to your student. Some differences may be subtle, others will be obvious. Explain and re-explain the rules of your household. Otherwise, irritation and resentment can build up, causing ongoing communication problems. Solving conflicts through communication will help to prevent irritation and built-up resentment. Each student brings his/her environmental patterns to the homestay. Some may have had more or less independence than you expect from your children. If your student feels confined or unaccustomed to reporting his or her whereabouts to you, explain to him or her that it is a family community custom to behave in this way, and that it has nothing to do with not trusting your student.



Try to behave naturally with your student. Be warm and welcoming but don't go out of your way to accommodate him or her. It may disrupt your own normal family life as well as being a strain on both you and your student. Continue with your usual family activities and include your student in them: meals, trips, entertainment events, etc...

Most travelers, especially teenagers, experience "culture shock" while visiting foreign countries. Culture shock is a result of the individual's separation from familiar surroundings, language, food, and customs. The impact of a complete change in environment manifests itself as anxiety, frustration, and fatigue.

Language difficulty is a big contributor to culture shock. If your student seems quiet at first, it may be because he or she is simply too tired to expend the effort to speak. Conversational English is often different than the English these students have learned in school. It is sometimes stressful and difficult for them to fully grasp involved conversations. The student may feel shy and upset about not being able to speak well. Try to make your student feel as comfortable as possible in his or her efforts to communicate, and to engage your student as much as possible in conversations. Your communication may begin on a relatively elementary level, but things will improve as time passes. Be patient and attempt to make yourself understood. Speak slowly and offer to help your student with the language. Getting involved with his or her academic lessons is also helpful. Try to set up a regular schedule in which all family members take turns working with the student.

You can alleviate your student's culture shock by helping him or her adjust to the new environment. Some students react to unfamiliar environments by trying to retreat from them. This may manifest itself in a student as a desire to talk about his or her native country at all times or an unwillingness to make new friends from outside his or her native land. Help your student assimilate by involving him or her in family activities that do not require much conversation. Sporting events, cooking, music, and art will draw the student away from thoughts of his or her home.

Television does not play as big of a role in all countries as it does in some American homes. There are usually fewer TV channels, the broadcasting day is shorter than ours, and there are fewer commercials, sometimes grouped in a certain time slot. Time watching TV should be limited for your student and it is encouraged to be done in a family setting. Exposing your student to "classic" movies is encouraged. Please avoid movies that have inappropriate scenes or language. Culture shock is only temporary; your continuing sensitivity to and patience with the situation will do much to improve it. Before long, your student will feel like a part of your family and participate in all events.

## **Meals**

Mealtime is a very important part of the day. Many international students are used to fresh fruits and vegetables in their daily diet, so please provide an adequate amount. Please ask your student what their food preferences are so you can purchase those items. It is very important for the student to maintain a healthy diet. At the same time your student must learn to eat American food. Encourage your student to try the different foods you serve. **Insist that your student eat with the whole family when you gather as a family. This is non-negotiable unless the student is sick.**

Students must receive breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day of the week. On school days, please make appropriate provisions for lunch, just as you would do for your own children. Meals should be nourishing, fresh, of sufficient quantity, and the menu should be varied. Please ask your student about any dietary restrictions and food allergies. Invite your student to accompany you to the grocery store or supermarket. Occasionally, you may want to consider inviting the student to help prepare a meal from his or her home

SCA IHP Family Handbook

country. Don't assume your student knows the first thing about cooking. Ask your student to describe meals and dining schedules in his or her country for you.

It is important to remember that your schedule may be totally different from your student's usual schedule. This doesn't mean that you should change your habits. Simply be aware of the differences. If your family's main meal is in the evening, explain to your student that lunch will be a light meal and encourage eating a bigger breakfast (cereal, toast, and juice or whatever your family is having) so that he or she doesn't get hungry during the day. Eating out of the refrigerator on one's own would be a new experience for most students.

Your student may be surprised at some of our eating habits. Snacking between meals and even while sitting on the floor may seem quite strange. Putting everything on the table at the same time rather than eating in courses may be a new experience. Table manners may vary from ours. In some Asian countries, smacking the lips while eating indicates enjoyment, not a sign of poor manners. People from other countries usually keep both hands on the table during meals. Milk is not usually a common beverage for most students. Many of the foods Americans customarily eat will be quite new to the students, such as fast and frozen foods, sandwiches, certain candy, watermelon, peanut butter, and corn on the cob.

There are so many fast food and family-type restaurants in the United States and schedules are often busy, so American families tend to eat out more often than families in other countries. The student is expected to use personal spending money for snacks or treats when out with friends and for any special meals they desire. All other regular meals are to be provided by you, whether at home or in a restaurant.

Feel free to demonstrate good manners to your student and to gently teach them about what is appropriate and what is not. This includes areas such as dinner table manners, greeting visitors, listening to iPods, texting, etc.

#### Meals:

##### Breakfast:

Breakfast in other countries is often light and tends to consist of bread or rolls with coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. In some countries they may have cold cuts, vegetables, and boiled eggs, as well. Some homestay families prepare breakfasts for their student. Breakfast may also be a self-help meal where your student prepares his or her own breakfast. If this is the case in your home, please direct your student to the appropriate cooking utensils and breakfast items, and instruct him or her in the use of any necessary appliances. A continental style breakfast may include juice, coffee, or tea with milk, cold or hot cereal, and bread such as bagels or muffins with butter and jam or jelly. Sometimes families prepare full breakfasts with pancakes, bacon or ham, eggs, etc. on the weekends when the pressure of getting to school and work on time is not a factor.

##### Lunch:

Lunch is to be provided for the student every day, both on school days and non-school days. Please make the same provisions for your student that you would for your own children. Show the student where to find the school menu to know what lunch is for the day. The student may choose to eat lunch or bring a lunch from home. It is the responsibility of the homestay family to make appropriate provisions for lunches. Please consult with your student and allow his or her input into the decision of what is best. Lunches are included in the student's tuition.

##### Snacks

Your student is responsible for purchasing any snacks that are for personal use and not for family consumption. Please provide adequate storage and refrigerator space for these items. Students should not store food in their room without permission.

## **Dinner:**

Dinner is a time when students should value practicing their English in conversation about the day's activities. It is a great time to get to know your student better and build a trusting relationship through conversation. Please make it a priority to have dinner as a family at least four to five times each week. Current events are popular topics for dinner time conversation. On rare occasions when you will not be home for dinner, please provide instructions for your student on how to prepare dinner. Additionally, please explain to your student that he or she is required to let you know if something in his or her schedule will cause him or her to be late for or miss dinner, and that the more advanced notice he or she can give, the better it will be for your family.

Your student may be shy and tend to eat quickly in order to return to his or her room for studying. Many of our international students are under pressure to excel academically, which may influence them to try and limit time spent with you at meals. Please do not be offended if this should occur.

The cost for all meals is covered through the monthly compensation package. Please provide meals that are reasonable in size. If the student is consuming more than seems reasonable or affordable, please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator.

## **Social Life**

Our relaxed atmosphere, the way we greet each other and the frequent use of the telephone may be surprising to your student. They may also find that there is less distinction among social classes in the United States than in their own country. Many people in other countries live in apartments or gated (guarded) compounds. Those who live in individual homes usually have small yards surrounded by walls, fences, or hedges. Your student may be surprised by the vastness of everything, at how large our farms are, and how spread out our cities are. While many Americans enjoy suburban living, many people in other countries consider it desirable to live in the city center.

The distance from one place to another in the United States may be almost inconceivable to your student. In the United States gasoline is cheaper than in most other countries. Students may be surprised at how often Americans use their cars and how few people use public transportation. In other countries, buses and trains tend to be a regular means of transportation as opposed to cars.

People in other countries often consider Americans to be wasteful consumers, but our respect of nature, concern for the environment, community pride, and patriotism usually impress people from other countries. They are surprised to see our flag displayed in so many places.

## **Transportation**

The homestay family should arrange for pick up transportation when the student arrives and departs the US. If this is not possible because the student arrives on a working day, then the homestay family must inform the International Homestay Program Coordinator.

Students are assigned homestay families located in safe and respectable areas. Homestay families are expected to provide safe transportation to and from school each day. The travel time from the home to school should average no more than 20-30 minutes each way, and the maximum allowable drive time each way is 45 minutes. Homestay students are not allowed to possess or drive a vehicle while in the homestay environment. Homestay students may only ride in vehicles driven by any SCA homestay parent. Students may not ride with student drivers without permission from the International Homestay Program Coordinator.

Some homestay families may choose to bring their student to and from school in route to and from work. It is very important that students not arrive late for the start of school at 7:55 a.m. Additionally, please provide safe travel for your student to the grocery store or other venues deemed appropriate as well as for family outings and church functions.

Students who desire to pursue a South Carolina Driver's License may do so only with the express written consent of their parents, homestay parents, agency, and the approval of the International Homestay Program Coordinator. Students who are approved to pursue a South Carolina Driver's License must make appropriate arrangements with their homestay parents to enroll in an approved driver training course. Any costs associated with driver training and pursuing a license are the responsibility of the student.

Students are **not** allowed to drive outside of an approved driver training course. Students may not own or possess a personal vehicle while enrolled at SCA. Students who have a license are required to surrender their license to the International Homestay Program Coordinator during the school year.

## **Other**

It goes without saying that in addition to the above, hospitality and friendship are the most important expectations of your family. Please treat your student as a member of your family and model the love of Jesus for him or her.

## **Keys To A Successful Experience**

### **Family Rules & Expectations**

The student's way of life in his or her home country is often very different from our average American lifestyle. Even among those of us who live in the United States, there are many variations. You need to discuss your family rules and expectations as soon as the student is rested and comfortable from his or her travel.

Homestay families should have created a Family Covenant that is shared with the International Homestay Program Coordinator. The Family Covenant is a document that defines the expectations for living life on a daily basis in your family's structure. The Family Covenant should contain at least 3 non-negotiables. Think of things that the student needs to know that are "written in stone" for your family. Please provide a copy of this covenant to your student upon his or her arrival once he or she is rested. Please discuss this document as a family and ask each family member to sign this covenant, agreeing to live by this covenant as a family unit.

Show the student how to use appliances such as the washing machine, clothes dryer, microwave oven, toaster, TV, DVD player, etc. Make sure your student is aware of any restrictions regarding the use of these appliances or any other restrictions in the home. Note whether your student really understands your instructions. If he or she does not understand, it may be wise to provide written instructions for each item. Be sure to discuss necessary subjects: meal times, breakfast instructions, telephone usage, computer restrictions, access to refrigerator, food/beverages not available to them (i.e. snacks), laundry procedures and frequency, bed times, etc. Many of these items may need to be included in your Family Covenant.

It should be noted that the Chinese government is more restrictive about what is allowable on television, in movies, and on the Internet. If your student is Chinese, please carefully instruct him or her on how to safely consume American media in the same way you would instruct your own son or daughter. Otherwise, it is

possible the student could quickly access destructive media and become addicted to it (i.e. pornographic or gambling internet sites).

Expect high standards from them. Build trust as quickly as possible. Catch them doing things right. Get to know your student, what motivates them, how they are unique.

Provide intentional counsel with the student on choices of friends. International students will need help initiating friendships. Discuss and monitor friend choices for honest, trustworthy friends who desire to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and also who seek to learn about the international student's culture, country, and story. Discuss conflict resolution with your student. See them as having the potential to grow in interpersonal skills.

Know where your student is at all times.

Provide academic support and accountability. Help them as they learn proper communication strategies with American teachers and communicate with teachers alongside them as needed.

## Communication

**Please note:** your student must have a cell phone that is always working and in service; they must carry their cell phone at all times.

Communication will be the key to a rewarding experience. This communication may not always consist of talking, however.

- Gestures and facial expressions will be extremely important. Remember that when communication is difficult, a smile is worth a thousand words.
- Individual speaking abilities vary greatly; the most important thing is getting thoughts and feelings out in the open to avoid misunderstanding.
- Compliments and encouragement can bring out the best in your student.
- Communication with your student is important regardless of their English fluency. Please remember that it is much easier to understand what is said than to speak. Also, even if your student is nodding and smiling, this does not necessarily mean that they understand you. Please ask comprehensive questions to make sure they understand what you have told them – especially if it is critical information (e.g. when to be picked up, where, etc...)

The first few days may be a little more difficult. Often students will not understand or follow when groups of people are talking.

- Speak slowly when necessary and try to be patient. It does not help to simply speak louder to your student! Rephrasing your sentence using simple words may help.
- Be aware of idioms and colloquial expressions that your student may not understand.
- It may be necessary to repeat important information regarding your daily routine and time schedule. Writing things down may be helpful, as well.
- Don't hesitate to correct their pronunciation and usage now and then, but encourage them to express themselves, even if they make mistakes. Don't be surprised if your student seems quiet at first.
- The change in schedule as well as the extra effort needed to communicate will contribute to your student's fatigue, and they will need time to adjust. They may simply need to rest at first.

- It is natural and should be expected that your student may want to be alone at times in his or her room. This does not always mean that your student is unhappy. However, if this behavior becomes excessive, you should talk to your student about how he or she is doing and encourage more interaction with friends and your family.
- You may also notice what might seem to you like a lack of enthusiasm. Children from other countries are often taught that it is polite to be quiet and calm. Being bubbly or excited is sometimes considered immature.
- Be aware that many students will have a limited vocabulary and may be unable to express themselves as they would in their own language. For example, you may find that the way they speak is quite direct, brief, or even seemingly harsh (“I don’t like it”, “I don’t want it”, “I go to bed”) You can help avoid misunderstandings by remembering that your student is probably thinking and feeling much more than he or she is telling you.
- Your interest in learning about your student’s country and the life of its people will help get your student involved in conversation. Young people may not be storehouses of statistics or specialists on political and economic situations, but they are able to share firsthand information about everyday life.

In order to maintain the integrity of speaking English only, SCA will not normally place two students from the same country into the same homestay family. Learning English is one of the primary goals of the International Homestay Program. Therefore, it is imperative that the homestay environment facilitate this English language growth for the student.

### **Manners & Cultural Differences**

Be tolerant of manners that differ from your standards. While some may seem to be unacceptable in our culture, they may be acceptable in the student’s culture. Discuss these differences without being critical and let your student know which behaviors are unacceptable in your home and in our culture. For example, some students may not say “please” and “thank you”, as this is not done in their own homes/cultures, though appreciation may be shown in other ways. The more you and your student communicate, the more your student will learn what is acceptable and appropriate behavior in our culture. Additionally, you will also learn more about the student’s culture.

### **Lifestyle & Activities**

Share your lifestyle with your student and make him or her part of your family to a great extent, but never fully. For example, never discuss personal or financial problems with your student. Arguments are a part of family life for every family, but please try your best to shield your student from these arguments and do not involve him or her. Instead, discuss things you enjoy such as music, sports, gardening, church, etc. Find out what interests your student and ask about his or her family, friends, country, lifestyles, etc.

The more you communicate, the more you will learn from and find out about each other. This will help provide a more relaxed atmosphere for your student in the home. Always invite your student to participate in family activities or outings. Most students will want to interact with your family in this way to help improve their English skills. Expect your student to nap often after school. This is common in many countries and your student may be tired after using English all day at school. Many students continue to nap daily during their entire time in the United States. Help your student avoid excessive naps as this may lead to altered sleep habits that affect their performance in school.

## **Household Duties & Chores**

Students may be expected, as temporary members of their American families, to help with the household chores that are also shared among the other family members. Families may assign students, as is the case with other family members, some simple and light household duties or chores. Students should be encouraged, if not required, to make their beds and keep their rooms neat and clean.

Students may be asked to help set the meal table and/or help clear the table after the meals or help wash the dishes. Some students are also asked to help with minor chores in the home (i.e., taking out the garbage, etc.). Students are to accept such expectations as being a part of the family. However, it is important that our homestay families understand SCA does not desire that any of our students serve as maids, servants, or housekeepers since their parents are paying for the homestay family experience.

Please do not expect babysitting responsibilities of your students. They may not have the communicative skills for this task and this could put your child at risk in the event of an emergency. Please consider the degree of risk, responsibility, and communication when assigning chores. Please remember they are not hired babysitters, handymen, or nannies.

Describe the division of labor in your home carefully. This will assure consistency and include the student in household duties. Explanations may be necessary since your student may be unaccustomed to being responsible for certain chores. Periodic reminders are useful since you are dealing with a teenager who often has their mind in other places.

## **Access to the Home**

Access to the home varies among families. Some families are comfortable giving the student a key to come and go as he or she wishes. Other families may have children who are under a curfew and may want their student to follow these same requirements, especially if their children are at similar ages. Whichever the case in your home, please explain your expectations to your student regarding acceptable times to be home at night as well as home security. It is appropriate to give the student an approximate time when he or she will need to be home each evening so that you will not worry. They should also provide you with phone numbers to call if changes occur.

## **Religion & Culture**

Historically, religion has played an important role in many countries, but diversity in practice is prevalent. Many Catholics in other countries tend to think of Protestants as one large group. They have a difficult time understanding the concept of various denominations which are common in the United States. Some students may be surprised at the role that religion plays in the lives of many Americans. Their views of society have often been shaped by movies, music, and TV shows. Host parents are encouraged to respect the religion and culture of your student and to learn more about the student's religious practices.

The students are required to attend the family's main weekly church service with their host families. Some students may be reluctant to attend church more than once a week due to their academic work load. Please remember that your student has a right to his or her religious beliefs, whether or not it agrees with your family's practice. At the same time, prayer at meals, family devotions, and casual family conversations about matters of faith should include the student.

The level of physical contact varies from culture to culture as well as within our own culture. If hugs and kisses are part of your family's lifestyle, please explain to your student that this is the way you show concern and caring, but be perceptive about the student's reaction and do not push for reciprocal expressions.

## Education

The curriculum in schools in other countries is highly structured and there are few electives or extracurricular activities. The systems are very competitive and selective, and homework is very important, even for young children.

- Mental and intellectual discipline is stressed, with emphasis on factual knowledge and the ability to analyze. Foreign languages, politics, and philosophy are studied more than in most American schools.
- Foreign languages are required for anyone who intends to attend university, and language study usually begins at age 11. English is an important second language and many students study another language as well.

You are encouraged to be involved in your student's school life. You will receive interim reports and report cards from the school for your student. You will also be able to access PowerSchool daily. Please review these reports and discuss concerns with your student. Please assist your student with questions for teachers concerning their academics. SCA provides international students with additional academic support. This academic support is available during study halls, if the teacher is available, and during after school hours.

International students are expected to enroll in a full course of study, and maintain at least a "C" average in their school courses, and have no failing grades. If your student is struggling with their school work, is failing a class, and/or falls below a "C" average, please discuss this with your student and the International Homestay Program Coordinator.

Most international students attending SCA have intentions to attend a prestigious American university. Because of this, they often sign up for service activities, various sport teams, student government, and other "resume building" activities. As the host parent, this may require a great deal of your time. It is suggested that you limit your student to just a couple of extracurricular activities. It is okay to say no to playing a sport all three seasons.

Please note:

- If your student is going to be late or absent from school, please follow the proper school procedures as stated in the SCA Student and Family Handbook.
- If you plan to take your student out of school for any reason, please obtain the necessary permission from the school. Please be sure to help your student contact his or her teacher for necessary notes and make-up work.
- Students should always return home after school or school activities unless permission has been given by the host family to be away or return home at a later time.
- When filling out emergency contact forms for the school, please use a relative, neighbor, or church friend as a back-up for emergency situations.
- Please note your responsibility for transporting your student to and from school activities. If you are unable to transport your student, please make arrangements.



## Recreation

While physical education is taught in schools in other countries, high school sports competition is rarely available in their home country. American football and baseball are little known, but many students are interested in learning more about them. The most popular sport in many parts of the world is soccer. Very often, people in other countries have to belong to clubs in order to participate in sports. Some of these are quite expensive and, as a result, some sports are limited. Encourage your student to try out for a sport at SCA if they are willing to dedicate the time and commit to the team. The student will need to have at least a basic knowledge of the sport before trying out. It is also a good idea to give your student exposure to opportunities in the area such as hiking, biking, and camping.

## Employment

Students may not take a job or be regularly employed. This is in keeping with SEVIS guidelines. However, students may work at a fund raiser car wash sponsored by your church or be active in service activities that might be required by the Senior Beta Club.

## Planning Activities

It is hoped that through participation in the daily activities of your family, your student will develop an appreciation for American life. Students will learn a great deal from sharing in your normal everyday life. They will find contrasts with what they are used to, and in some cases, differences from what they have heard about the United States. It is certainly not fair to generalize, but many have the idea from movies and television that the United States is New York on the east coast, Los Angeles on the west coast and little but prairie and farmland in between. Help foster a better understanding of American culture, geography, and history as found in our area.

- Remember the importance of opportunities for your student to observe things which may seem insignificant to you but tell a lot about your way of life, such as visiting your place of work, going shopping, getting groceries, looking at family pictures, or recalling important events in your family's life.
- Games and sports are usually good mixers and can be a fun way to "break the ice".
- Students are not permitted to "date" until they are 17 and then only with the permission of the International Homestay Coordinator and the SCA administration. Students may participate in group get-togethers and may be escorted to banquets and dances when appropriate. Allow your student to make friends and encourage their friends to visit your home to watch a movie, play a game, or just "hang out".
- Allow your student to spend the day with a friend (shopping, playing outdoors, playing video games, etc...). Although, as a host parent, you should place a limit on the number of times you will drive your student to meet up with friends.
- Although you are not expected to plan daily excursions, it would be nice for your student if you could visit a few points of interest in your area. If you plan for a day or weekend trip somewhere, why not plan it during your student's visit?

Some host families have enjoyed sharing activities with their students from the list below. Many are no-cost or low-cost activities. You can share this list with your student and decide together what looks interesting.

Very often children from other countries will respond "no" to a suggestion simply because they have been taught that it is more polite to do this than to agree to something. Strongly encourage your student to take part

in activities, even if the first response is negative. Instead of asking “Would you like to do this?” say “Let’s do this.” Or “We are going to...” Many times a student doesn’t know how to answer a question about an activity because he or she may not be aware of the cost and time involved and does not want to be a burden. Promote participation and enjoyment by being encouraging, frank, and honest.

More important than any number of activities is the attitude each member of your family takes toward hosting a student. If everyone is involved and concerned about making the experience worthwhile, everyone will benefit.

#### Possible Activities for at Home and Away

- Purchase an inexpensive blank book and encourage your student to journal daily
- Go to the library and check out a book or DVD
- Visit a local industry and take a tour
- Go to a baseball game (local or pro)
- Go to an amusement park or fair
- Attend a festival or arts and craft show
- Attend the International Festival
- Take a low-cost community education course – they are offered on a variety of fun and interesting subjects
- Participate in your local parks and recreation program
- Take an aerobics, jazzercise, or dance class, or do some weight-lifting. Sometimes the local YMCA or other sports clubs have special short-term memberships.
- Visit a local museum or art gallery. Students are often especially interested in Native American culture and traditions.
- Visit the state capitol building, courthouse, or other historic sites
- Go to a zoo
- See a university campus – check out the architecture, see the sports facilities, visit the student union
- Drive to a state or national park and take a picnic lunch – see some lakes or mountains, visit a ski resort, do some hiking
- As your state tourist or visitor’s bureau to send you a guide outlining events in your state
- Visit a water park or swimming pool
- Float down a river on a raft or inner tubes
- Play some games – card games, board games, etc... Have everyone learn a new game together
- Pick fruit at a local farm
- Show your student how to prepare American food (they love chocolate chip cookies, homemade ice-cream, Jell-o, etc...)
- Help your student prepare a typical dish from his or her own country
- Have a backyard or neighborhood barbeque
- Visit a radio or television station and take a tour
- Enjoy a sporting event of the season
- Take your student on your errands. Many of the things we consider “routine” are new experiences for your student
- Make a scrapbook or home video with your student to help document their time with you

**Most of all, have fun!**

## Vacations, Trips, & Emergencies

The primary goal of the International Student Program is for students to attend school and experience America through their classroom and host family experiences. Homestay families may wish to take vacations or weekend trips at various times. If you would like to invite your student with your family on such a trip, and it does not conflict with the student's school schedule, you are free to do so. If the student will be held responsible for any expenses, it is imperative that these expenses be explained at the time the trip is discussed with him or her. If an unexpected emergency arises that requires you to leave town, please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator and let her know of the situation and/or for assistance in making arrangements in finding a temporary homestay family.

Since our program has an academic focus, and due to liability concerns, we have guidelines in place regarding student travel, particularly overnight travel. The purpose of travel policies and required forms is to ensure that, while under the guardianship of Spartanburg Christian Academy, students are as safe as possible and that the International Homestay Program Coordinator is made aware of their whereabouts at all times. It is the student's responsibility to provide the International Homestay Program Coordinator with all necessary travel forms, filled out completely and accurately, two to four weeks prior to overnight travel. The travel forms referenced on the following pages are available in the International Homestay Program Coordinator's office.

Students are **not** permitted to take a trip alone without adult (25 years or older) supervision. **Under no circumstances should students be left alone overnight.**

- Students are not allowed to travel alone by bus or train. Students may travel alone by airplane; however, arrangements must be made for an approved adult to provide transportation for the student to and from the airport.
- SCA reserves the right to reject any travel proposal that involves "high risk activity". These activities include, but are not limited to: hunting of any kind, handling firearms or any activity involving the use of firearms or weapons, skydiving, bungee jumping, and operating motor vehicles (ATVs, snow mobiles, cars, boats, aircraft, etc...). If you have any questions about whether an activity is considered "high risk", please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator.
- SCA discourages frequent or extensive personal visits to or from friends or relatives during the program. It is, however, understandable and natural for international students to wish to visit relatives or friends of their natural families while they are in the United States. Such visits may be permitted if they do not interfere with the primary obligation of the international students to their host families and schools, and if proper permission is obtained from the International Homestay Program Coordinator and from the student's natural parents.
- Since the first months of the program are an important adjustment period for the students and the host families, visits to or from friends and family should take place after this period, and it is recommended that such visits take place toward the end of the program.
- Students will not visit home during the prolonged break at Christmas unless special permission is given to travel. Holidays, including Spring Break, will be spent with the host family.
- The International Homestay Program Coordinator's approval is required for student overnight stays outside the host family's community.
- Students are not allowed to travel to their home country during the school year, unless a special exception is made. Occasional exceptions may be made to return home in cases of death or serious illness of an immediate family member.

- The International Homestay Program Coordinator will decide if the trip is permissible. Factors that determine whether the student can go include school grades, overall attitude, whether the mode of transportation is safe (driver must be 21 years or older), how safe the destination is, and whether they are staying with a responsible adult (25 years or older).
- If any changes are made to the trip plan, e.g. in mode of transportation, destination, travel partner, or the days going on the trip, the trip must be resubmitted for approval.

### Overnight Travel With The Host Family

- **Any time** a student wants to travel overnight outside of their host community, but within the United States, with their host parents, the student must advise the International Homestay Program Coordinator of their travel plans at least two weeks in advance and complete a travel release form.
- **Any time** the student travels **outside of the United States** with the host family, the student must submit a request to the International Homestay Program Coordinator:
  - Travel Proposal Form for Outside of the United States
  - Natural Parent Release for Travel with the Host Family Outside the United States

**NOTE:** If a student is planning to travel outside of the United States, he or she must contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator regarding any visa forms that would need to be signed in order to re-enter the United States. Students must abide by the visa restrictions of the country they plan to visit. It is the student's responsibility to investigate such visa requirements with the help of the International Homestay Program Coordinator. Spartanburg Christian Academy does not bear any responsibility for information or procedures relative to the visa requirements of the destination country.

### Overnight Travel With An Adult Other Than The Host Parent

- **Any time** a student wants to travel overnight within their host community e.g. on a sleep-over, this is permitted as long as **the host parents know the parents at the home in which the student will stay**. Sleepovers are permitted for **up to two consecutive nights**. If a student intends to stay at another home in their host community the student must submit:
  - Travel Proposal Form
  - Host Parent Permission Form
- **Any time** the host family does not know the parents at the home where the student will stay for a sleep-over, the student must:
  - Get permission from the International Homestay Program Coordinator
- **Any time** the student plans to travel overnight outside the host community with someone who is not the host parent (e.g. another family, church youth group, etc.), the student must submit:
  - Travel Proposal Form
  - Host Parent Permission Form
  - Independent Party receiving Acceptance Form for Independent Student Travel
- **Any time** the student plans to travel overnight outside of the United States; with someone who is not the host parent, the student must submit:
  - Travel Proposal Form
  - Host Parent Permission Form
  - Independent Party Receiving Acceptance Form for Independent Student Travel
  - Natural Parent Release for Travel with School, Church, Clubs, or any other Independent Party during the Program

**NOTE:** If a student is planning to travel outside of the United States, he or she must contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator regarding any visa forms that would need to be signed in order to re-enter the United States. Students must abide by the visa restrictions of the country they plan to visit. **It is the student's responsibility to investigate such visa requirements** with the help of the International Homestay Program Coordinator. Spartanburg Christian Academy does not bear any responsibility for information or procedures relative to the visa requirements of the destination country.

### **Overnight Travel With The Natural Parents**

**NOTE:** Visits with the natural parents are discouraged until the end of the student's program. Students are not permitted to return to their home country during their stay unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. a death in the immediate family). Travel to their home country would need to be specifically approved by the International Homestay Program Coordinator.

- Any time the student wants to travel overnight with their natural parents within the United States during the school year, the student must submit:
  - Travel Proposal Form
  - Host Parent Permission Form
  - Natural Parent Release for Travel with Natural Parents

**NOTE:** If a student is planning to travel outside of the United States, he or she must contact the International Program Homestay Program Coordinator regarding any visa forms that would need to be signed in order to re-enter the United States. Students must abide by the visa restrictions of the country they plan to visit. **It is the student's responsibility to investigate such visa requirements** with the help of the International Homestay Program Coordinator. Spartanburg Christian Academy does not bear any responsibility for information or procedures relative to the visa requirements of the destination country.

### **Overnight Host Family Travel Without International Students**

If you plan to travel out of town without your student, please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator in order to make arrangements with a preapproved respite family, a family member, neighbor, or friend with whom you are familiar and trust to care for your student.

**Please see the International Homestay Program Coordinator for copies of these forms.**

**Each student should be in possession of his or her own original I-20 form.**

## **Spending Money and Finances**

### **Telephone Use**

Please carefully explain your expectations for your student regarding the use of your family telephone. It is a good idea to establish an acceptable length of time for personal telephone calls, and perhaps the number of calls received or made daily. Please inform your student that use of your telephone is a privilege and that it is not to be abused. If you desire for your student to ask before using the phone, please make it clear from the beginning. Students should keep all phone calls brief. If a family member needs to use the telephone, the student should give up the phone, especially if the family member must make an immediate phone call.

All long-distance phone calls must be made either “collect” or with a phone card. Do not allow your student to make long distance phone calls and charge them to your telephone. If you discover this has occurred, please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator who will discuss this matter with the student and seek proper resolution.

It is imperative that you warn your student about 900 or 976 numbers (pornographic or psychic lines, etc.) that are inappropriate; these numbers may be advertised on television and may have expensive costs associated with them. Please advise your student that he or she is not permitted to call these numbers.

Please also advise your student of the appropriate and inappropriate times to receive phone calls from friends and family in his or her country, especially since in many instances these are significant time differences. Your student must tell his or her family and friends back home not to call your home late at night when the family is sleeping unless there is an emergency that cannot wait until morning. Students should have a personal cell phone at their own expense, but should not use this at inappropriate times. The student’s phone should be working at all times and set to English.

### **Technology Usage**

Talk with your student about appropriate computer use in your home. If the student’s study area is located in his or her bedroom, the computer screen should always be facing the open door, and all technology devices should have a designated keeping place outside the bedroom for sleeping time. This serves two purposes: it limits the potential for inappropriate computer activity (e.g. gambling, pornography) by eliminating long periods of isolation with access to the computer, and it encourages sleeping during the overnight hours when many of our students’ friends are awake and communicating in their home countries due to the time difference. Students are required to turn in all technology devices to the homestay parents at the prescribed family bedtime (if one is prescribed in the Family Covenant) or by 11:00 p.m. (whichever is earlier). Students may occasionally request permission from the homestay parents for a late night with technology for academic purposes. Homestay parents reserve the right to grant or deny such a privilege as they see fit.

When accessing the internet, students are required to connect through the homestay family’s internet (wifi) connection only. Students are not allowed to connect to the internet through any other means (e.g. 3G, mifi, etc.) while in the home. Homestay parents reserve the right to determine appropriate study areas and areas where technology devices are on or off-limits to the student. Homestay parents reserve the right to monitor all computer activity through the use of internet filters or other filtering programs as outlined in the Family Covenant. Homestay parents should closely monitor internet and other technology use.

Please be aware that in many cultures some vices (e.g. gambling, pornography) are not considered vices in the same way that they are in American Christian culture, but are considered to be a normal part of growing up, or in some cases a characteristic of reaching maturity. It is very important that you clearly communicate the standards in your home to your students in this area and remain faithful and diligent in upholding these standards. Students are not allowed to have phones, earbuds, etc. at the dinner table or at inappropriate times when they should be interacting with the family.

## **Harassment**

The SCA homestay program protects the right of every student to have an environment that respects human dignity. Harassment and/or abuse of students are contrary to biblical principles, morally wrong, and illegal. The homestay program expressly forbids sexual harassment (opposite or same-sex) and any threatening/offensive conduct or expressions with respect to gender, race, color, national origin, or age.

Harassment can include a pattern of remarks, gestures, jokes, physical contact, teasing, excessive attention, bullying (including cyber bullying), and/or pictures or written material that a person finds personally threatening, derogatory, offensive, or unwanted. Sometimes individuals responsible for these actions may not know they are offensive. If evidence of harassment in the homestay environment is found the student will be immediately removed from the home and the proper authorities will be notified.

## **Medical Expenses and Insurance**

You are not responsible for medical expenses if your student becomes sick or injured. Spartanburg Christian Academy or the student's agency will purchase medical insurance for your student. This insurance coverage runs through the entirety of the academic year, ensuring that your student will be covered the entire time they are under your supervision. Insurance cards and insurance information will be given to each student and homestay family. Please keep a copy of this insurance information in an accessible location. The International Homestay Program Coordinator will serve as the liaison with the insurance company. Please contact her directly with any questions or concerns.

Please refrain from taking your student to the emergency room unless it is an actual emergency (e.g. life threatening, broken bone, etc.). Please visit a doctor's office (Urgent Care) for all sicknesses and normal medical needs. Because a majority of our students are minors, we must have the natural parents' permission/authorization before major procedures or tests are performed. Please know that the student insurance is limited and may not cover all procedures or tests

## **Compensation**

You will receive a monthly stipend for hosting your student. This payment will be issued either from SCA or the student's agency depending on the agreement. Payment will be made after the receipt of the monthly report from the host family. The stipend payment will be the same for all ten months. The stipend is to cover all expenses incurred as a result of hosting your student, including transportation, meals, room and board, etc.

If for some unexpected reason the student withdraws from SCA during the course of the school year, the final month's stipend may be prorated to reflect the student's departure date. Compensation is not extended beyond the student's withdrawal from SCA. Otherwise, from August-May, you will receive a stipend check as long as the student is enrolled at SCA.

## Handling Homestay Family-Related Issues

You should extend discipline to your student according to your Family Covenant. With rare exceptions, you should deal directly and gently with the student as your first recourse. Everyone hates to hear about our faults from a third party without first hearing it from the one we have offended. Conversely, we will do all we can to encourage your student not to complain to his or her parents about issues with the homestay family without first trying to resolve these issues face to face.

If you have tried the above and still have unresolved issues, please contact the International Homestay Program Coordinator. The next step will be a personal meeting involving the homestay parents, the student, and the International Homestay Program Coordinator as well as any other appropriate SCA administrative or agency personnel.

Encourage your student to be direct and honest with you if he or she is angry, hurt, disappointed, confused, etc. A student may complain to his or her parents back home, the parents then complain to the student's agent, the agent contacts SCA and SCA then hears the "other side of the story" from the homestay family. This tendency of a student avoiding direct contact with the homestay family is an exceedingly difficult habit to break, but do not give up trying.

Interpersonal conflicts can usually be resolved if handled in an open and caring way at the homestay family level. Please treat your students the same way you would treat your own children. Unresolved problems only tend to grow larger with time, so do not delay in contacting the International Homestay Program Coordinator if resolution is not occurring in an individual situation. Also, do not hesitate to be interested and appropriately involved in the academic work and extracurricular involvement of your student, but allow SCA administrators, faculty, and coaches to handle all major academic and school-related extracurricular problems.

## Progress Reports and Evaluations

Spartanburg Christian Academy will regularly evaluate the homestay families of our international students. You will be required to submit monthly progress reports via email to the International Homestay Program Coordinator. These will be forwarded to the natural parents. Progress Reports are designed to take not more than ten minutes to write each month unless, of course, major problems arise. These emails should be sent to the International Homestay Program Coordinator by the due date every month. In these monthly emails, please include as much of the informational listed below as is practical and pertinent.

1. the student's adjustment to American life.
2. adjustment to Spartanburg Christian Academy
3. adjustment to American food
4. study habits
5. amount of time spent on phone and internet
6. going to bed at a reasonable time
7. progress in English
8. positive character qualities you observe in the student
9. areas where the student needs to show improvement
10. progress in the student being forthright with you in many areas
11. amount of time spent with Chinese rather than American friends
12. seriousness of purpose in looking ahead to universities of interest to them
13. evidence of home-sickness
14. news about the homestay family (anything that may be of interest)



These monthly progress reports are narrative in nature. There is no form that must be completed and submitted. Please send these as normal emails to each of the following:

Kathi Johnson: [kjohnson@fbns.org](mailto:kjohnson@fbns.org)

Some agencies require specific reports. You will be notified if you are to complete additional reports.

In addition to the monthly progress reports, SCA will conduct annual evaluations of all homestay families near the conclusion of each school year. At that time the International Homestay Program Coordinator will interview by survey each homestay family and international student who participated in the International Homestay Program. It is our goal to use this information to help the homestay families evaluate their participation in the program and identify changes that should be made by the family, student, or SCA. If problems arise throughout the year and require immediate attention, SCA does reserve the right to evaluate the homestay family situation and initiate necessary changes.

### **Summer Months & Holidays**

Homestay students return home for the summer months. Homestay families are responsible for the care of their student upon the student's arrival in August until the student's departure in May, even during school holidays and breaks. There is no increase in the monthly stipend for hosting over school holidays during the school year. All student travel must be approved according to the procedures outlined in the *Homestay Student Handbook* and *the Homestay Family Handbook*.

### **Summary of Homestay Family Experience**

It is our hope that this handbook has provided you with the necessary information to make your participation in the SCA International Homestay Program successful and rewarding. It is our desire that your experience as a homestay family can be summarized as follows:

“The student is here to learn about American family life from an insider's point of view. As a learner and a friend, the student participates in the family's normal day-to-day activities. Through discussions, the student learns about the family's values, beliefs, outlook, and historical roots. Over time and with continued involvement, the student usually develops a strong relationship with family members, a relationship of deep caring and high mutual regard. Through involvement with the family, the school, and the community, the student builds foundation for understanding the culture of the United States.”

There appear to be two basic dimensions to being a host family for an international student:

1. Sharing your Christian lifestyle with a person from another country
2. Providing a helping hand to a student who is new to our culture

We at Spartanburg Christian Academy hope that you will open your home and hearts to a student who wants to get to know your family, learn English, and learn about our culture. We only ask that you be loving and caring, but to also remember that you are not “preparing the road for the child, but you are preparing the child for the road.” All things being equal, it is better to come across with firmness at the outset and move toward flexibility than it is to experience the opposite because your student has over taken “the mile” when you thought you were only giving “an inch”.

## RESOURCES:

### Summer:

- Email your international student and family with pictures and information about your family.
- Attend host family orientation meeting (date and time TBA)
- Research a little on your student's country before they arrive. [www.asiasource.org](http://www.asiasource.org) is a great resource for Asian countries and [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com) is a good source for current events.
- Prepare a room for your host student
- Get together as a family to write the Family Covenant

### The first week with your host student:

- Visit a grocery store and a Wal-Mart type store together and if possible, an ethnic food store
- Establish a place and list for the student to add items to the grocery list during the week
- Take the student to your bank to set up bank accounts in the local area
- Set up computers in the family area, not in the bedroom, if possible
- Establish household standards for garbage, bathrooms, laundry, and assign chores
- Go over the Family Covenant with your new student
- Gently help/insist they stay awake until 6p.m. so their sleep patterns adjust to US time zones
- Help the student get a cell phone, if they do not arrive with one
- Establish a weekly family devotional time- devotion led by parent and prayer requests, family business can be shared/discussed at this time
- Watch an American movie (and a movie from their culture, if possible) to talk about cultural differences

### Daily:

- Provision of breakfast, lunch (a packed lunch or SCA lunch) and dinner
- Transportation to and from school
- Review the next day's schedule in detail
- Spend time with your student to provide academic support, and emotional check-in on how the day went, concerns, etc...
- Note: international students will typically spend twice as much time as an American student on academics in the evening. The average international student should be allowed up to 4 hours of homework a night. This means that after extra-curricular involvement, a student may complete homework from 6:30-10:30 each night.
- Provide an opportunity for the student to use the internet for at least 30-60 minutes per evening. If a student is struggling academically, limiting usage to 30 minutes is recommended.

### Weekly:

- At least 3 cooked meals together with the family with some informal "How are you doing" type conversations
- Family devotion time weekly and church attendance
- Review between student and host parent on use of time during the past week: sleep habits, internet usage, concerns, etc...  
Look ahead to the next week and confirm plans around anything new/unusual in the schedule.