

SIERRA COLLEGE



Homestay Host Handbook

Homestay Handbook

Contents

I. Introduction

Welcome to Sierra College Homestay.....	3
The Hosting Experience.....	4
Suggestions for Things To Do with Your Student.....	10

IV. Cross Cultural Training

International Students Dealing with Culture Shock.....	11
American Informality.....	13
American Values.....	14

III. General Information, Policies & Procedures

Overview of Immigration Information.....	16
Medical Needs of International Students.....	17
Vacation Policy.....	18
Reasons to Remove a Student.....	19

V. Appendix

Host – Student Homestay Agreement.....	20
Transportation Information.....	22
Homestay Contact Information.....	23



Welcome To The Homestay Program at Sierra College

We appreciate your willingness to reach out and share our culture and values with the international student community. Our hope is that your time spent hosting an international student will be an enriching and mutually rewarding experience.

This handbook is meant to acquaint you with our program and to offer you help and information that will be useful to you and your student. Enclosed you'll find program material, cultural information relating to hosting, college contact information, a list of community resources, and other basic information to help you get started.

Much training and cross-cultural learning happens on an on-going basis. Hosts who have welcomed international students into their homes for years are still learning, improving and adjusting. There are certainly common features experienced by both host and student within the Homestay experience; however there is not a manual written that prepares you for every possibility that Homestay may present. Indeed, inviting a young adult from a foreign culture into your home can be nothing less than an adventure!

We're pleased you've chosen to join us in this exciting and educational program. Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

All the best,
Jon Hamblen & Tanya Hanrihan

THE HOSTING EXPERIENCE

Hosting an international visitor can be a very exciting experience for the host family and student alike. Thorough communication of expectations ahead of time is the best way to maximize the positive results that can be gained through the hosting experience.

Preparing for the Student's Arrival

Prior to the student's arrival, there are several things the host can and should do to prepare:

- **Prepare the students living area** – Hosts should prepare the student's living area with the amenities listed under the requirements for hosting prior to the student's arrival. Please note that although it is a very nice touch to furnish the room with hominess, do *not* use expensive or irreplaceable antiques and/or family treasures.
- **Prepare a set of house keys and a list of your important contact details for your student** – Students will need a set of house keys as well as your address and phone information. Preparing a small card with your contact details for the student's wallet is encouraged and appreciated.
- **Communicate with all family members about the hosting experience** – A successful Homestay happens when all members of the family agree that taking an international student into the home is a good idea. Realize that there may be apprehension on the part of some family members, and discuss those issues.
- **Correspond with your student prior to arrival** – It is a good idea to write, e-mail or call your student prior to their arrival. This helps to give the host better insight into the student's personality, their likes and dislikes, and their expectations. In return, the student's family learns more about the host family that their child will be living with. Corresponding will also help make your first meeting less awkward.

Student Arrival

Students who are just arriving in our country or who are already in the area will arrange for their own transportation from the airport, unless the Host Family wants to meet them at the airport. We find that greeting them at the airport is a great way to begin your relationship with your student. In either case, they will arrive excited, yet anxious to learn about their new living situation, wanting to please and fit in. In general, you can expect your student to be quite accommodating and looking to you to take the lead. Communication and cultural understanding in these first few days is very important in setting the tone for the Homestay experience.

For students who have flown in from their home country, excitement may be high. During the first hours students may not be the least bit tired and usually want to take in as much as they can. However, some students will be tired or jet-lagged after the long journey. Some will be hungry and others will not be hungry or not want to eat for a day or two. Remember, the combination of being excited and being on a different time clock can produce some different behavior and disorientation for a few days. Some students adjust quickly to their new home, and some take much longer.

Many host families experience “quiet” students and are concerned about the student not being happy. American communication in general is very verbal and direct. Students may come from countries that are

quieter, not as direct and less verbal. Gentle encouragement from the host family to participate in discussions may be helpful in assisting the student to adjust.

After greetings and introductions, show the student their room and around the house and tell them where things are. They may not remember everything you initially tell them, but it will help them feel at ease in their new surroundings.

In the first few days there are many important items to discuss. You should instruct him/her in the use of household equipment, and also discuss any house rules.

Some important topics to discuss in the first few days:

<i>Sleeping arrangements</i>	<i>Public and private spaces in the home</i>
<i>Washing clothes</i>	<i>Entering and leaving the house</i>
<i>Use of TV, stereo, radio, computer</i>	<i>Treatment of pets and animals</i>
<i>Use of kitchen and appliances</i>	<i>Use of alcoholic beverages</i>
<i>Family religious practices</i>	<i>Family handicaps or illnesses, if any</i>
<i>Family rituals and activities</i>	<i>Family waking and bedtimes</i>
<i>Household routines and schedule</i>	<i>Use of bathroom</i>
<i>Use of outdoor areas</i>	<i>Smoking policy in your home</i>
<i>Rules regarding guests</i>	<i>Transportation</i>
<i>Fire alarms & security systems</i>	<i>Food</i>
<i>Telephone use</i>	<i>Homestay payments</i>
<i>Storing Belongings</i>	<i>Household chores</i>

Language

Many students have studied some English, but competencies will vary. Functioning in a second language can be an exhausting and overwhelming experience for even the most fluent speakers. You can facilitate your student's comprehension by speaking slowly and trying not to use too much slang. In the inevitable moments of confusion or misunderstanding, try the following:

- Face the student and speak distinctly. Speak slower. Speak loud enough to be heard but don't raise your voice. They are not hard of hearing.
- Use simple vocabulary, grammar and short sentences. Perhaps try writing out what you are trying to convey.
- Pause more frequently, to allow time to assimilate what you have said. They often "translate" in their heads.
- Encourage the student to speak regardless of errors and do not interrupt to make corrections. The best way to correct is by modeling that is, repeating what is said in the correct manner. Be generous in your praise of progress and efforts in speaking.
- Be silent. Americans hate silence, but wait! Do not rush to fill in gaps of silence in a conversation. Your student may be trying to translate. Also, some cultures appreciate silence more than we do in the U.S.

- Assume that your student comprehends *less* than you think they do. If you think you have not been successful at conveying something, you are probably right. Ask the student to repeat back to you what they understand. Be aware that a nodding head may be a polite way of pretending to understand or an indication that they hear you, rather than a gesture of true understanding.
- Be patient. You may have to try many different ways of saying something.
- Watch for non-verbal cues. Some cultures put more emphasis on the use of non-verbal cues than American culture does.
- A sense of humor is enjoyed world wide, but jokes often do not make sense across cultures. You may playfully joke to your student that they took a family possession, and the student may run to his/her room feeling accused of the action. In the same vein, avoid the use of sarcasm. Sarcastic remarks can easily injure, insult or demean.
- Even the most fluent English speakers have been thrilled when their American hosts have made efforts to learn and use a few words in their students' native language.

Food

Your student may not eat a lot after arrival. Imagine uprooting your life, living with a family from a different culture and having to eat different foods. It may take a week or two before students begin eating regular amounts of food. Americans focus heavily on quantity and in general international students tend to eat less, you may find that your student is a light eater. It's a good idea to take them on a trip to the grocery store where they can point out some of their favorite foods. It's important to let your student know ahead of time what the family meal schedules are, what meals they will be expected to prepare for themselves, where food items are kept, where they can store their own food items, etc. Make it clear to the student, that as a family member, he/she should feel free to help themselves to food between meals. Understandably they will feel uncomfortable about doing this at first. Show them what they may eat and assist them in finding and preparing snacks until they are comfortable doing it for themselves. Remember – helping themselves may be a difficult concept.

Try to make dinnertime a family occasion, a time to gather together and share the day's event. This is a great time to relax, get to know each other better, and learn more about one another's culture. Please be aware that in some cultures it is considered rude to speak during mealtime. Explain to your student that in American culture, mealtime is considered a time for socializing, and conversation is encouraged.

Your student is here to experience American culture and daily life, and you should not feel that you must regularly recreate his/her traditional cuisine. They will most likely be eager to try American foods and the wide variety of ethnic foods that are available in the U.S. In regards to budgets - if after time you notice your student consistently wants things that are outside of your family budget, or not what you would consider a reasonable purchase, let them know they can purchase special foods with their own funds.

Student Transportation

Transportation is very challenging and although hosts are encouraged to help the student learn about local transportation options, hosts are *not* required to regularly provide student transportation.

Religion

Many hosts become confused when the weekly worship day rolls around. Should they invite their student to their place of worship? Do they need to cater to the religious preferences of the visitor?

The best policy is to follow your typical religious practices while respecting the religious preferences of your visitor. If your family regularly attends church, it is perfectly appropriate to invite your guest to attend with you, but attendance should *never* be insisted upon. Similarly, if your foreign visitor is particularly observant of his religion, it is only common courtesy to help him find an appropriate place to worship.

While discussing religion certainly need not be avoided, the best policy is simply to be sensitive and respectful of your student's personal beliefs while maintaining your own. Occasionally, a family that is particularly enthusiastic about their own faith wants to devote a great deal of time discussing religion with their guest. Not surprisingly, if a student is not interested they are often put off by this and may even strongly resent it. Respond appropriately to your visitor's level of interest in religion. If your visitor pursues a conversation, feel free to respond to his questions and comments. However, if your student seems disinterested for any reason, it's probably best to move on to a new subject.

Money

Students are responsible for their own financial matters and should set up their own bank account. Students *should not* keep large amounts of cash in their possession, and hosts should advise their students of this. It is not only unsafe, but hosts cannot be held responsible for large sums of cash that a student may "tuck under the mattress". Families should not become involved in any banking or financial issues. Host families are not responsible for providing an allowance, monitoring spending, or lending money. Additionally, setting up cellular phone service, acquiring automobile insurance, etc. is clearly the responsibility of the student.

Students may be anxious to discuss Homestay fees. They should know prior to arrival what they are expected to pay, but may not know how to bring the subject up. It is one of the topics best discussed in the first days after arrival. Students will need to pay the Homestay fee and deposit soon after arrival, unless alternate arrangements have been made prior to arrival. Let your student know how you prefer the payment (cash, check, etc.), and discuss how it will be handled. Homestay payments should be paid every month, on the date the student moved in and receipt of payment should be given to the student by the host.

Hosts should not lend money to a student. If hosts feel that their student is not receiving enough money from home, or is spending beyond their means, they should contact the Homestay Advisor.

Personal Items

Students are responsible for purchasing their own toiletry items, school supplies, club memberships, social events, etc. However, if the family takes their student to dinner or a social event, typically the family is responsible for the cost. (Obviously there are times when some social events preclude this, and expectations should be discussed in advance.)

Telephone and Computer Use

When students arrive, families should clarify the use of telephone, computer and Internet. Students have computers available for use on campus, and often have their own laptops. We advise hosts not to let the students use their personal computers, as problems may arise. In addition, if students have their own laptops and want to use the Internet at home, the host may want to ask the students to put in their own phone line. This should be done at the student's expense, and should be in the student's name.

For long distance phone calls, students must use a calling card. If the student did not arrive with a calling card from home, one can purchase prepaid cards quite readily. They are available at a host of places in the Rocklin/Roseville area (Wal-Mart, Costco, 7-11, etc.) Hosts who are worried about student phone use may

want to put an international phone-calling block on their line. Please note: *reasonable* local phone use is included in the student's Homestay payment, and should not be an additional charge for the student. Phone rules should be the same for the student as with other family members.

What To Do If Problems Arise

Problems are not necessarily going to occur, but whenever two or more people reside in the same household, occasional problems can arise. This is no different when it comes to hosting an international student.

Generally, intercultural problems revolve around simple cultural misunderstandings and can be easily resolved by merely talking about them in a relaxed, matter-of-fact manner. Keep in mind that your foreign visitor may hesitate to bring matters up out of fear of seeming ungrateful, consideration for not hurting someone's feelings, concern about not being respectful as a guest, or out of the belief that things will be made worse.

The best course of action to take if minor problems arise is to remember that your student may not know the American social rules, nor do they understand (or necessarily share) American values. Keep in mind that many common behaviors and values that we take for granted (for example: Honesty is the best policy) may be shocking to a foreigner. It is not that they want to be dishonest with us but they may want to avoid hurting someone's feelings or being disrespectful, as per the norms of their culture. Conversely, many behaviors that foreigners consider "natural" may seem odd or shocking to us. The point is to remain flexible and realize that people generally aim to please and be cooperative, and that any difficulties that arise are usually due to misperceptions or mismatched basic assumptions for how to conduct oneself. These differences are neither good nor bad. They are simply ways of making sense of the world from alternate cultural viewpoints.

Common mistakes of Hosts include:

- **Having unrealistic expectations of the foreign visitor** – International students are just like everyone else – they are humans who sometimes make mistakes and are not perfect.
- **Desiring to be a host to learn a foreign language** – It is best to remember that a foreign visitor is here to learn English or to learn about US culture, while pursuing their academic goals.
- **Hoping an international student will be a good example for one's own children** – This doesn't work and often creates resentments within the family. Also, do not expect your children and your student to become instant friends. Happily, sometimes this happens, but not always.
- **Failure to respect the visitor's culture** – This doesn't mean that one should give up family routines and values, but it does mean that one should try to be sensitive to the beliefs and values of your student. For example, cooking pork chops for dinner when hosting a Muslim demanding a Buddhist to attend your church are culturally insensitive activities.

It is important to remember that hosting relationships frequently involve a mixture of wonderful times as well as some difficulties and misunderstandings. If difficulties arise, do your best to work them out. Try not to blame individuals, including yourself. You need to remember that your student is facing a new and unfamiliar environment and is trying to adjust. It is difficult and exhausting being in a place where one does not speak the language. Your student is learning many new things and is being exposed to a new way of life. It is important for all host families to try to understand situations from their students' point of view.

If problems seem bigger than you can handle, please feel free to discuss them with the Homestay Advisor. The sooner we are aware of any problems, the sooner we can assist in solving them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR STUDENT

The more often you include your student in family activities, the more rewarding your hosting experience will be. However, hosting a student doesn't have to mean expensive outings and statewide touring. There are wonderful, inexpensive activities right in our own community. If you want to take your student on extensive trips and outings, feel free. However simply accompanying you in your normal family routine can be very educational and fulfilling for them. The most wonderful thing you can do with your student is simply spend time and talk with them. Below are some ideas for things you can do together:

Inexpensive Activities

Picnics	Playing tennis, baseball, Frisbee
Roller-skating	Starting a scrapbook together
Ice skating	Going berry picking
Bicycle riding	Making a pie
Bowling	Baking bread
Family get-together	Playing card or board games

Share

Your wedding album	Home movies
Baby books	Hobbies
Family Pictures	Family traditions and reunions

Visit

Your church	Flea Markets
Local dances	Museums
Local tourist spots	County fairs

Go

Horseback riding	Sailing
Shopping	Ballet, concert, symphony, plays
Visit the beach	Hiking
Camping	Movies
Ferry riding	Picture taking

Ask Your Student To Accompany You To

The supermarket	Costco (American culture!)
Your religious activities	Your clubs
Your children's activities	Your child's school
Your weekend activities	

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

International Students Coping with Culture Shock

All new college students' first days are filled with new experiences and change. However, international students confront many new things. They will be experiencing adjustment to a new academic and living environment as well as an entirely new culture. This adjustment process is often referred to as culture shock.

As a host family an understanding of culture shock can be very helpful. There are five distinct stages of culture shock that all humans experience when they travel to or live in a different country or culture. Culture shock is almost like a disease; it has a cause, symptoms, and a cure. It is important to understand that culture shock happens to all people who travel abroad, but some people have much stronger reactions than others.

Whenever someone travels overseas they feel out of place. They have been in their own culture their entire lives. Most people do not think too much about the culture they are raised in, but our culture helps to shape our identity. Many of the signals of interpersonal communication (body language, words, facial expressions, tone of voice, idioms, slang) are different in different cultures. One of the reasons that we feel out of place when we are in a new culture is that we do not know all of the cues that are used in the new culture.

Honeymoon Phase During the first few days of a person's stay in a new country, everything usually goes fairly smoothly. The visitor is excited about being in a new place; they may have some problems, but usually accepts them as just part of the newness. They may find themselves staying with a Homestay family that is excited to meet the foreign student. They may find that "the red carpet" has been rolled out and they may be taken to restaurants, movies and tours of the sights. The Host family may want to take their student out to many places and "show them off." This first stage of culture shock is called the "honeymoon phase."

Unfortunately, the honeymoon phase often comes to an end fairly soon. The student then has to deal with transportation problems (buses that don't come on time), shopping problems (can't buy favorite foods) or communication problems (just what does "Chill out, dude." mean?). It may start to seem like people no longer care about their problems. They may help, but they don't seem to understand their concern over what they see as small problems. They may even start to think that the people in the host country don't like foreigners.

Rejection Phase This may lead to the second stage of culture shock, known as the rejection phase. The student may begin to feel irritated and start to complain about the host culture or country, noticing only the bad things that bother them. At this stage the student either gets stronger and stays, or gets weaker and goes home (physically, or mentally).

Regression Phase If the student does not overcome the rejection phase successfully, the student may enter into the regression phase. The student may spend much of their time speaking their own language, watching videos from their home country, and eating food from home. The student may surround themselves with a group of friends who speak their own language.

The student may only remember the good things about their home country, thinking it was wonderful place in which nothing ever went wrong for them. Of course, this is not true, but an illusion created by culture shock.

Recovery Phase Once the student makes it through the regression stage successfully or miss it completely they, will move into the recovery phase. In this stage the student will become more comfortable with the language the customs of the host country. They can now move around without a feeling of anxiety. They still have problems with some of the social cues and may not understand everything people say. However, they are now 90% adjusted to the new culture and begin to realize that no country is that much better than another, it is just different lifestyles and different ways to deal with the problems of life.

It is important to remember that not everyone experiences all the phases of culture shock. It is also important to know that they can experience all of the stages at different times; they might experience the regression phase before the rejection phase, etc. They might even experience the regression phase on Monday, the recovery phase on Tuesday, the honeymoon phase on Wednesday, and the rejection phase again on Thursday.

Host Family Awareness

Culture shock does not strike suddenly or have only one cause. It builds up slowly, from a series of small events, which are sometimes hard to identify. Host families may notice certain behaviors in their students, which they recognize as this adjustment process. Signs may include: fatigue, anger with minor frustrations, physical symptoms such as too little or too much sleep, stomach aches, headaches, sudden intense feelings of loyalty to ones own culture, withdrawal to friends only from their own culture, extreme homesickness, frequent crying, under or over eating.

Even though students may not be able to side step culture shock, there are ways host families can help them move through it.

Recognition Simply by being aware of culture shock and its symptoms and understanding the process is helpful. Students will have been given information about culture shock at Orientation, but they may not have really understood it, or may have forgotten it. Talk with them as much as they will allow it.

Encouragement Through this entire process please encourage your student to be patient and kind to themselves. Help to remind them what their goals are and why they decided to come to America. Let your student know that you are there to support them in their adjustment and not to criticize them. Remind your student that the process is normal and they have not failed. Encourage your student to be active and to get out to experience American life. Visiting public places such as shopping malls or sporting events can help students learn how American customs are practiced. Encouraging students to become involved in community activities, international clubs on campus and exercise can also help. Include them in your family activities. And don't forget – the more students practice their English, the more they will feel at home in their new culture.

Patience It takes time to move through the phases of culture shock, and people are affected to different degrees. Be patient in this process, allowing them to work through the adjustment process.

American Informality Through The Eyes of a Moroccan Student

By Bouchra Moujtahid, with comments (*in italics*) by Janet Davidson

Friendliness, informality, casualness, and self-reliance: values commonly associated with Americans, right? Not only do we value these attributes, we consciously look for such qualities in the people we recruit as hosts for international students. We intuitively feel that students placed with friendly, casual, help-yourself-type hosts will more quickly feel at home.

Oops! Another case of cultural myopia, as Bouchra Moutjahid recently pointed out. One of the biggest problems she encountered soon after her arrival was understanding how to relate to the informality she found all around her. Her composition gives us a view of how others see us, and it clearly shows how best efforts can have effects completely opposite from our intentions.

“HELP YOURSELF”

These two words were the worst words I heard during my first two weeks in the United States. I misjudged these words, and the people who used them, in my ignorance.

When I first came here, I had problems. I could not make anything for myself or touch anything in the house because I thought it would be rude for me to help myself as a guest. I thought my host mom should fix everything for me without my asking. I did not understand what was going on in the house. In my culture, when someone comes for the first time to my house, my mom and I immediately understand that the person needs to be fed without asking any questions. We fix a big meal for him/her and we never say, “Help yourself.”

In my home country, my mom used to fix meals for everybody in the house, and I thought it was the same everywhere. In America, in my host family, everybody in the house fixes his/her own breakfast and lunch, which I thought, was rude. For me, I was right and they were wrong.

I also had problems with openness. In my first weeks in the United States, I was starving. Food was readily available, and I was asked if I wanted it, but it was not put before me already made. I did not eat. My host mom always fixed dinner, but for lunch and breakfast, I was on my own. I was too shy to fix my own food, even to take an apple! Everyone was helping themselves except me, but I just couldn't. For one thing, I did not know how to make anything, but I also felt too uncomfortable. I would not help myself to my host's purse: how could I help myself to her food?

I misunderstood in my first days here that when we finish our meal, everybody has to wash his/her own plates or, at least, put them in the sink. I used to leave them on the table. I did not know that I had to clean my dishes, because in my house in Morocco, once everybody finishes, either my mom or the maid picks up everything and does the dishes. So, with my host mom, I used to eat and leave the dishes on the table. Even if I saw other people clean the table, it did not occur to me that I should do the same. I didn't even consider the idea that this was the habit of the house.

Even when I began helping myself, I didn't take the risk of fixing anything for others in the house because I thought it might offend them. I did not understand the rules of “help yourself”.

Everything has changed now. I have learned to be more flexible and to bend with things I couldn't quite understand. I learned that different people do things in different ways, and I realized that I was mistaken by saying I was right and everybody else was wrong. I used to hate the words "help yourself", but I like the words now. I actually started using them myself, and whenever I use them, I laugh and remember how easy it is to misunderstand or misjudge a situation or a person just because of a few words.

Bouchra had had considerable experience with U.S. Americans in Morocco and had been oriented both in her predeparture and in her school orientation about informality in the United States. Her experience clearly demonstrates that knowledge and behavior do not necessarily jibe; even after she learned that something was permissible - and, in fact, expected - behavior, she could not bring herself to change her actions immediately. It was not until much later that she was able to change her attitude.

Bouchra Moutjahid (Morocco) was a student at Edmonds Community College, Lynnwood, WA. Janet Davidson was Director, International Programs, Skagit Valley College, Mount Vernon, WA. Reprinted by permission from Community Section Newsletter NAFSA.

An Insight into American Behavior

Most Americans would have a hard time developing a list of the values that Americans live by. Many Americans have never thought much about it and even if they did, they would probably decide not to answer with a set list. The reason for this is one core American value—the belief that every individual is so unique that the same list of values could never be applied to everyone, or even most people.

Cultural anthropologists have come up with a list of common American traits and most Americans see all of these values as positive. They are not aware that many people in Third World countries see American values as negative. We have provided this list in order for you to be able to communicate these traits to your student and help them to understand some basic American behavior that may seem very strange to them.

Time

Most Americans place a high value on time. Americans are very busy and over scheduled. It may seem to the international student that Americans spend much of their time rushing around and are always worried about tomorrow or next week. Time is important to Americans, because they think that if they use their time effectively they can accomplish more than if they were to "waste time". Many other cultures feel that it is more important to be "present" in each moment of ones life and to develop personal relationships that it is to "get things done". It is important for you as a host family to express to your student that Americans find it rude to be late for an appointment, even if only by ten minutes. If your student comes from a culture that is not so concerned with time, they may not understand this concept when they arrive.

Individualism

Americans see themselves as completely unique and separate from other people. They do join groups, but they do not believe that they are the same as the other members of the group. Americans often feel isolated and alone because the culture does not foster community. People often live alone and do all activities alone. Americans often try to initiate a feeling of community, and it may last for a while but ultimately Americans see themselves a separate from other individuals. If your student comes from a culture that values the group above the individual this may seem very sad to them and they may not know how to put themselves and their wants ahead of the groups.

Equality

Americans value equality above most things. Equality is so sacred to Americans that it is protected by the Constitution of The United States. All people in America are born free and equal with the opportunity to pursue personal happiness. The majority of the world is not familiar with this concept and your student may feel more comfortable knowing their “rank in society”. International students may find it strange that each person in America is treated respectfully regardless of their job or social standing.

Competition

Americans believe that competition challenges people and motivates them to be the best they can be. Competition exists in every part of American life, from the work place to school. American children are even encouraged to compete with their siblings. Your student may be very uncomfortable with the level of competitiveness in America, especially if they were raised to support the needs and desires of their family and community before their own wants and wishes.

Directness

Americans value direct and open communication and may distrust anyone who hints at the truth. They tend to be very abrupt and sometimes callous when delivering unpleasant news. International students may find this way of communicating intimidating and rude. Americans are also very open about their private lives and often share more information with a stranger than people from other cultures share with close family or friends.

Material Wealth

Most of the world views Americans to be very materialistic; while Americans think that their possessions are just the result of hard work. They think that they deserve life’s comforts because they work so hard and if other people were to work hard, they too could have these things. It is very common for American families to have multiple cars, televisions and numerous other possessions that other cultures would consider luxury items.

It is common for Americans to keep upgrading, buying bigger and better things. Since Americans value innovation they are constantly throwing out the old to replace it with new. Your student may be overwhelmed by the size of your home, the number of appliances and by such things as the water that commonly comes out of the refrigerator.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

Non U.S. citizens are required to follow various rules and regulations to enter into and continue to stay in the U.S. International students are required to follow procedures particular to their situation. Although it is solely the student's responsibility to maintain documents and handle immigration issues relating to their status as an international student, host families may want to understand what the various documents are that the students carry, or have been issued.

- **Passport** This document is issued by the student's own country of citizenship. It provides proof of citizenship and should be kept in a safe place. The student must carry it whenever traveling outside the U.S. borders. They should have an extra copy of the passport and keep it in a separate location in case the passport is ever lost.
- **I-20** This document is issued by the school to which the student has been accepted. It is taken along with other documents to the U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy in the student's own country in order to obtain a student visa. This document should be kept with the passport, along with any previous I-20's. A designated signer in the International Students Office (ISO) must sign this document when the student leaves the country to confirm current status.
- **Visa** A visa is a stamp and or affixed page in the passport and the country to which the student wishes to enter issues it. Sierra College students receive their visas from U.S. authorities overseas in the students' countries of origin. U.S. visas are not given in the U.S. There are many types of visas issued by the U.S. government, but international students at Sierra College typically enter with an F-1 visa.
- **I-94** This is an Arrival/Departure Record, and is a small white card stapled into the passport at the port of entry. It is surrendered upon leaving the U.S. except for brief visits to Canada or Mexico.

Travel to Canada or Mexico As a host family you may want to take your student on a trip to Canada or Mexico. Please be aware that anytime an international student travels outside the U.S., documents must be signed and in some cases visas need to be obtained *prior to departure*. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that their documents are in order before leaving the USA. Students are advised of the following procedures at orientation and advising sessions:

- Students should find out they require a visa before entering the country they want to visit. They should always check with their home country consulate and the Mexican or Canadian consulates for the latest requirements for entry. Some students may need to go to the Canadian or Mexican Consulate to obtain an appropriate visa.
- If the student has not had their I-20 signed within the last 6 months, they should bring passport & I-20 to the ISO at least one week in advance of a trip outside the U.S. A designated signer in the ISO will sign the I-20, and check the other documents.
- The student must take their passport (which includes the I-94), their signed, current I-20, plus previous I-20's, when crossing the border.

rev 6/06

rev 6/06

MEDICAL NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students are required to have health insurance. Although it is solely the responsibility of the student to acquire health insurance and seek medical care if necessary, host families may want to understand the resources available to the student.

Students will have insurance through Somerton Insurance. In addition to health insurance, dental insurance is also available on a voluntary basis; however, in most cases students do not opt for dental insurance. Most will have paid by the time that they arrive.

Insurance will pay for acceptable medical expenses, and students will be responsible for the deductible. The student may be required to pay for the entire cost of the visit, and then submit receipts and medical records to Somerton for reimbursement. Keep in mind that this is medical insurance, not dental. Although students do have the option to purchase dental insurance it is not mandatory so many students only have medical insurance.

The website for CCN is: <http://www.ccnusa.com/dol/index.html>

Routine Care If students need to see a doctor they should seek out medical care. Unless it is an emergency, students are encouraged to visit our on-campus health center. The health center will treat the student or refer them to a CCN provider.

Emergency Care (Accident or Serious Illness) In the event of an emergency a student should seek out care at the nearest emergency room. Students are encouraged to carry their insurance card with them at all times.

Additional information:

- Somerton Insurance (underwritten by: ACE American Insurance Company Philadelphia, PA www.somerton-ins.com)
- Sierra College Health Center: 916-660-7490

Tuberculosis All international students are required to be tested for Tuberculosis (TB). Students are given the Mantoux Tuberculosis skin test. Occasionally, students test results are positive. A positive tuberculin skin test only tells that a person has been infected with the TB germs. It does not tell whether or not the person has the TB Disease (Often times students have been vaccinated against TB using Bacille Calmette-Guerin and this may cause a false positive tuberculin skin test). If a student has a positive skin test, they are then required to have a chest x-ray to see if they actually have the TB disease. This information was taken off of the Center for Disease Control website. For more information please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/pubs/tbfactsheets/250101.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/pubs/tbfactsheets/250010.pdf>

VACATION POLICY

For students who wish to go out of town while they are living in a Sierra College Homestay, the following procedures and practices are in place:

- Students and hosts must discuss vacation plans at least two weeks in advance. Plans must be agreeable to both parties.
- If the student is away 15 nights or less, there is no discount for vacation.
- If the student will be away for more than 15 nights, the rate *during the student's absence* is 50% of the daily pro-rated Homestay stipend.
- If the student and the host prefer to make the room available to a different Homestay student during the original student's absence, all personal belongings must be moved out and/or stored before the student leaves on vacation. In this instance the student pays no stipend for the nights he/she is away.
- If the student intends on moving out upon return from vacation, he/she **must** communicate those intentions to the host prior to departure. The student should either move out all of his/her belongings, or pay the amounts stipulated in the vacation policy prior to leaving on vacation.

Example:

A **traditional Homestay student** regularly pays \$700 per month. He is planning on being away on vacation for 20 nights. His rent for the month will be calculated as follows:

1. Daily pro-rated amount for a Traditional Homestay student:
 $\$700.00 / 30 \text{ nights} = \23.00 per night
2. Rent for nights that student is away during the month:
 $\$20.00 \text{ per night} \times 50\% = \11.50 per night
 $\$11.50 \text{ per night} \times 20 \text{ nights away} = \230.00
3. Rent for nights during the month that student is in Homestay:
 $\$23.00 \text{ per night} \times 10 \text{ nights} = \230.00
4. Total rent paid for month
 $\$230.00 \text{ for nights away} + \$230.00 \text{ for nights in Homestay} = \460.00

For assistance in calculating vacation rates, please contact the Homestay Advisor at 916-660-8288 ext.3522

REASONS TO REMOVE A STUDENT FROM HOMESTAY DUE TO STUDENT CONDUCT or CIRCUMSTANCES

Sierra College may exercise the authority to remove a student from a host family, due to behavioral or other issues on the part of the student. Following is a list, although not inclusive, of possible reasons for doing so:

- Host family and student have incompatible living styles.
- Non-payment of student fees, or habitual lateness in payment.
- Student misconduct in the living situation.
- Student fails to adhere to the terms of the Host Family – Student Agreement.
- Student fails to respect the house rules and property of the host family.
- A change in student behavior, or discovery of an undisclosed illness, health issue, habit or preferences.
- Inability to afford Homestay, or a change in student status.
- Student refusal to interact with Host Family where the communicated expectation was a desire for family interaction.
- Student use of excessive foul language, alcohol abuse, illegal drug use, or other violations of Sierra College's Code of Student Conduct.
- Discomfort of host in having student in the home, regardless of proof of host accusations.
- Student is no longer a Sierra College student or has been asked to leave the country by the USCIS.

HOST – STUDENT HOMESTAY AGREEMENT

This is an agreement between _____ (student) and _____ (host). The student will be living in the home of the host for a period of at least one school semester (seventeen weeks). The student's move in day was _____.

A. Obligations of Student.

1. **Rent.** Student shall pay \$_____ rent each month, payable in advance on the _____ date of each month.
2. **\$150 Security Deposit.** Security deposit is to be paid to the host upon moving in, and is refundable to the student within 30 days after moving out if there are no unpaid bills, no damages to the host home caused by the student, and the student has given adequate notice before moving out.
3. **Vacation rates** for Homestay are stipulated in the application and orientation materials, and the student and host agree to abide by these rates.
4. **No Smoking or Use of Alcohol.** Smoking is outside only. Student shall not consume or be under the influence of alcohol in the house.
5. **Respect for Host's Property.** Student shall at all times respect and use due care to avoid damaging Host's property. Unless otherwise stated in this contract the student has no right to use property of the Host other than bedroom, furniture, bathroom and shared facilities. Student shall keep both student's and Host's property reasonably clean, neat and tidy. Host's permission to use Host's property shall not be construed as permitting student to allow third persons to use said property.
6. **Utilities.** Student shall not make long distance calls on Host's telephones with Host's permission and shall use a pre-paid calling card to cover the cost of same. Student shall use only reasonable amounts of water, electricity, and gas as needed for normal living activities.
7. **Rules of Conduct.** Student at all times shall adhere to Sierra College Code of Conduct while residing in Host's home. Student shall at all times adhere to Host's reasonable rules including to obtain permission to bring guests into Host's home; and to notify Host if student will be late to prepared meals, turn-in time or other standing family events or deadlines.
8. **Termination.** Student can terminate his/her stay at the Host home by giving twenty days written notice to both Host and the College advisor, using the form supplied by College which is available on line at <http://www.sierracollege.edu/Programs/internationalStu/housing.html> If student quits the premises prior to said twenty days, he/she shall forfeit the balance of rent paid for that month as well as his/her deposit.

B. Obligations of Host.

1. **Dwelling.** During the term hereof Host shall provide student with a private bedroom and a shared or private bathroom, towels and linens, a study desk, sufficient bedroom lighting for studying, use of laundry facilities, use of kitchen facilities, and shall provide some prepared meals each week.
2. **Mutual Respect.** Host shall respect student's privacy and religious needs, and avoid damaging student's property. Host shall refrain from any harassment or other illegal conduct toward student.
3. **Reporting.** Host shall report to College any unexplained absence by student, and shall report any illegal conduct.
4. **Termination.** Host can end the student's stay at Host home on twenty days written notice to student and to the College Homestay Advisor, along with a refund of the balance of rent paid for that month, and any unused Security Deposit.

C. **Other.** The terms and provisions hereof shall remain in effect for at least the duration of the Homestay, and shall not be modified except by a writing signed by both Host and student. It is expected that this placement shall last at least one semester. Problems can and do arise between Host and student from time to time, and it is expected that the parties will communicate freely with each other in a reasonable attempt to work out such problems informally. If the student and the Host cannot work out their problems informally, the parties agree to speak with the Homestead Advisor.

Notwithstanding any other provision herein, Sierra College will not be held financially or otherwise responsible for disagreements between the student and host, or for misconduct by either.

We, Student and Host, agree to abide by this agreement for the duration of the Homestay.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Host

rev 3/09

Date

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Students are responsible for their transportation needs. Below is a list of resources for public transit information.

Placer County Transit

- <http://www.placer.ca.gov/works/pct.htm>
- (530) 885-BUSS for Auburn, Loomis & Rocklin
- (916) 784-6177 for Granite Bay & Roseville
- (800) 889-BUSS for Colfax and Alta
- (530) 889-2342 or (916) 788-2342 for Dial-a-Ride information

Roseville Transit

- <http://www.roseville.ca.us/transit/default.asp>
- (916) 774-5293 for general information
- (916) 774-5757 for Dial-a-Ride information

Host family members may give rides to their student if they desire to do so. Host Family members are strongly encouraged to assist their students with becoming familiar with public transit routes that service their neighborhoods. If more information is needed, please contact the Homestay Advisor 916-660-8288 ext.3522

HOMESTAY CONTACT INFORMATION

The International Students Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30am - 4:30pm, except for holidays.
Following are various contact details you may need.

Housing Director

Jon Hamblen

(for clarification and referrals regarding rules & processes, interpersonal conflicts, emotional issues)

Office Phone - (916) 660-7382

Fax: (916) 630-4532

E-mail: jhamblen@sierracollege.edu

International Housing Advisor

Tanya Hanrihan

916-660-8288 ext.3522

(for clarification and referrals regarding rules & processes, interpersonal conflicts, emotional issues)

Email: internationalhousing@sierracollege.edu

International Students Office

Jean Toussaint – Student Services Technician

Darlene Nelson - Student Services Technician

Office Phone – (916) 660-7330

Fax – (916) 630-4522

Email: internationalstudents@sierracollege.edu

Sierra College Police Services

(for emergency situations)

Security Personnel on Duty 24 hours/day

Office Phone – (916) 660-7120

Handbook Rev: 3/09