



International Elementary Exchange Program
"Opening Minds to a World of Possibilities"

2019-2020

HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

Eisenhower & Zarrow International School

Zarrow Program Coordinator:

Emily Rouse – rouseem@tulsaschools.org

Cell – 580.370.8789

Eisenhower Program Coordinator:

Jennifer Starr – starrje@tulsaschools.org

Cell – 918.406.1964

Vision & Mission:

We will provide and assist each student with a well-rounded and differentiated education that is centered around the immersion of the Spanish language and culture to prepare them for a more global society.

One Child, Two Languages—Unlimited Possibilities

HANDBOOK FOR ZIS/EIS HOST FAMILY ORIENTATION

Dear Host Family Volunteers:

Thank you for agreeing to host an exchange student in your home. We feel that this will be a valuable experience for your family and for your guest. We hope that this information will help you and your family create a rewarding experience for your exchange student. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding the hosting experience.

EXPECTATIONS

Building family relationships: When preparing to host an exchange student, it is essential to have reasonable expectations about the exchange experience. **Sometimes the host student that comes to your home may not become best friends with the hosting ZIS/EIS student.** This is not necessary for the exchange to be successful because the exchange student will have a relationship with every member of the family, not only with your student. There will also be times when the exchange student and your student will need time away from each other. It is very natural for the children to not always do everything together.

House rules: Be prepared to be **firm** and have **some family rules** in order to give the exchange student some boundaries. Be specific as to what you expect of them. This includes chores and routines. This should be done in a kind and reassuring manner; remember they could be homesick. The key is to be prepared to communicate your family expectations.

PLANNING FOR ARRIVAL

- Read about Madrid, Spain and Heredia, San Jose, Costa Rica as well as other areas of Spain and Costa Rica before the exchange students arrive to have a better understanding of your student's culture.
- It is also very important to have corresponded with your student via email, phone, Skype or more commonly, WhatsApp. This communication should happen especially *before* the students arrive.
- *Planning Activities:*
 - A schedule of activities will be developed for each exchange during the school day. Such activities for Spain will include Woolaroc, Gilcrease Museum, Woody Guthrie Center (plus the Guthrie Green food trucks for lunch) and the Tulsa Air & Space Museum. Costa Rica will visit Woolaroc, the Tulsa Air & Space Museum and Gilcrease Museum.
 - Please **do not** take your exchange student on any activity that involves guns (including bb guns) or on any motorcycle rides.
- Individual families or small groups are encouraged to organize additional activities.
- A list of the exchange students and their host families with their phone numbers will be provided.
- Welcome Party with Host Families
 - **For Zarrow:** TBD-Potluck Style
 - **For Eisenhower:** TBD-Potluck Style
- *Airport welcome:*
 - All host families are asked to be at the airport to greet the students when they arrive. You may want to make a welcome sign along with balloons or flowers or a box of candy and/or a small gift in order for your host student to feel welcome and easily find their host parents when just off the plane.

- **Spain Flight itinerary**
 - **Arrival-** TBD-first week of September
 - **Departure-** TBD-first week of November
- **Costa Rica Flight Itinerary**
 - **Arrival-** TBD-first week in November
 - **Departure-** TBD-first week of December

CHAPERONES

- Some of the adults like to invite the chaperone for dinner, shopping or lunch on the weekends. However, avoid inviting them during school hours, as they are needed at school during those times.
- You may contact the chaperone during school hours or at their host home if you have a question regarding your student. You will be given telephone numbers of the family hosting the chaperone.

COMMUNICATION

CORRESPONDENCE:

- It is necessary that the EIS/ZIS host families correspond with the exchange students and their families before the exchange students' visit to Tulsa. There are fewer adjustment problems and homesickness if the exchange students have become previously acquainted with their host families.
- In your correspondence, you can include photos of your family, home, pets and extended family members in order to acquaint the exchange student with your family.
- Do not hesitate to ask the exchange student's family about their lifestyle and share similar information so that the host student will feel more comfortable while in your care.
- ***Do not forget to WhatsApp your exchange student's family the first week that they are here.*** E-mailing, texting or phone calls are essential and should be on going by the host parents. If you are able, please try to email or send pictures through WhatsApp to their parents occasionally of their student participating in various activities.
- Do not allow the exchange student to communicate more than one time a week with their family; it will make them more homesick, not less.
- WhatsApp is a very useful free, international texting app that works with an internet connection.

TELEPHONE/SKYPE:

- Upon arriving and settling down in your home, allow the exchange student to call home to let their parents know that they arrived to their host family's home safely.
- After the initial phone call, communication should only be once a week. Usually the weekends work better for the phone call. Host parents can be in communication with the host student's family to plan the day and time accordingly. Each weekend, the time may vary based on activities planned, but a general timeframe works well to keep it consistent.
- Spain is 7 hours ahead of Tulsa. However, they observe Daylight Savings on October 27 at 3AM and we observe Daylight Savings on November 3 at 2AM. During this week, there will only be 6 hours between the countries.
- Costa Rica will be 1 hour behind Tulsa until we observe Daylight Savings, then we will be on the same time.

BEDTIME

- During school days, your exchange student should be in bed no later than 9:00pm or when your own students go to bed. On weekends, they should be in bed no later than 11:00pm. For the first two or three days, the host students will be extra tired because of new environment adjustments, **culture shock**, and traveling. Please be sensitive to this and make sure that they get adequate rest.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

- Your student will be happy to share a bedroom (given that the students are of the same sex) or it would be fine to use a guest bedroom as well.
- Either way, please let your own student know of your plans before the host student arrives, especially if they will be sharing a room.
- If sharing a bedroom, question your student and the visiting student to make sure that they are getting along and that no conflicts have arisen because of night lights or other reasons. If there are problems, it would be good to negotiate a solution rather than taking one side or another. Remember, you are their “parent” while they are with you, this gives you the right to keep the house rules.

CLOTHING

- Each student will bring enough clothing to wear while here. They have school uniforms that they should wear every day. Do not buy them new clothing unless it is a gift from you.
- Make sure that your exchange student has a place to hang their clothes in a closet and has drawer space for their other clothes.
- Make sure that the student changes their clothes often enough. From time to time, **you may wish to ask for dirty laundry** and in some instances go looking for them. You may want to check the suitcase for hidden dirty clothes.
- If you wish for the host student to do their own wash, teach them how to use the washing machine. Set your own rules about this and discuss with them how your family handles the dirty clothes and what you would like to see happen. Or, ask for dirty clothes with plenty of time to make sure that they will always have something clean to wear.

CHORES

- If you expect your student to do chores at home, then the exchange student should also help. You may want to be specific as to what chores you expect them to do while in your home. Do you want your student to make their own bed? Do you want your student to pick up their own plate?
- The host student can accompany you to the grocery store and on other errands to see the ways of American families.

BEHAVIOR

- Exchange students are selected by their teachers according to grades, personal maturity and good behavior, and therefore, problems should be minimal. However, if problems arise such as not doing homework, or respecting the house rules, please notify the chaperone or Emily Rouse (ZIS)/Jennifer Starr (EIS).
- Every home and family has specific rules. The exchange student, even though a temporary member of your family, will have to abide by those rules. Remember: you are this host student’s parent while they are here.

HOMESICKNESS

- It is natural for the host student to be homesick during the first days that they are here but in most cases, they bounce back relatively soon. Keeping them busy will help alleviate the homesickness.
- If the exchange student is shy and withdrawn or crying for longer than you would consider normal do not hesitate to contact the chaperone &/or Emily Rouse (ZIS)/Jennifer Starr (EIS). We can set up an appointment with the four of us (host student, host parent, chaperone, and coordinator and /or our counselor) and work to resolve the problem.
- You may want to occasionally invite a friend over to play in your home after school; however, this should not become a daily occurrence or a necessity.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENT

- All host studentren are covered by a special insurance, which includes accident, illness and repatriation benefits. **Please read the insurance details included with your student's information packet. It may be necessary to call in advance for pre-certification or referral prior to the doctor's visit. Please notify the chaperone *before* the coordinator if the student needs to be taken to the doctor.**
- Should the host student become ill, treat them as you would our own student. If you feel that a visit to the doctor or hospital is necessary, do not hesitate to do so. However, unless it is an emergency, please avoid taking the host student to the Emergency Room, as the cost is several times that of an ordinary visit to your family physician.
- **ALWAYS NOTIFY THE CHAPERONE AND EMILY ROUSE/JENNIFER STARR BEFORE YOU TAKE THE HOST STUDENT TO THE DOCTOR OR A HOSPITAL IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.**

FOOD

- Do not change your eating habits or meal times for the benefit of the exchange student. They should learn about our typical habits and ways of life. The exchange student may not eat much for the first few days due to their new environment and adjustments to our way of life, **culture shock** and/or fatigue. Take these things into consideration, but do not worry as most children adapt quickly and easily.
- If they express they are hungry before they adjust to our eating schedule, offer them a little snack and explain when dinner will be ready.

POCKET MONEY

- Your exchange student will get a weekly allowance from their chaperone, typically on Mondays or Fridays of each week.
- Some students may bring extra money to spend, especially if they have a list of gifts to buy while here.
- When you take them shopping you may wish to advise them on items to purchase.
- If you want to buy them a present, you are at liberty to do so, but do not give them any extra money.
- **If you and your family go to a movie or out to dinner, you are responsible for paying for the exchange student as if they were part of your family.**

WEEKENDS

- Should you leave for the weekend with your exchange student, it is extremely important that Emily Rouse/Jennifer Starr and the chaperones have a telephone number where you can be reached in case of an emergency. Notify Emily Rouse/Jennifer Starr **before** leaving the city with your exchange student.
- If no group activities are planned, feel free to organize your own activities. You may want to include the chaperone as well. The exchange students really enjoy and look forward to times when they can see their friends outside of the school environment.
- Include the exchange student in all family activities. Should you go swimming, canoeing or boating be sure they wear a life jacket. Use your own judgment for safety rules as you would your own student.
- Church attendance—you may take your exchange student to your church or synagogue if that is your practice.

SCHOOL ORIENTATION

- The exchange students and their chaperone will be given a tour of the school on their first day of school—this date is TBD depending on their arrivals.
- For Zarrow, typically, there will be a welcome party during lunch on their first day of school for the exchange students. They will go on a tour of the school, and then relax in the library with games with their peers. More details to come.
- For Eisenhower, typically, there is a welcome breakfast for the exchange students. They go on a tour of the school, and then they eat breakfast and casually chat. Later on, they eat lunch with their peers in the cafeteria.
- The first day is taken to get acquainted with the school and their new routines, etc.

CAFETERIA FOOD

- The exchange student can get lunch in the cafeteria or bring a lunch from home. Cafeteria food at ZIS/EIS will be provided free of charge (same as all other TPS elementary students), but if your host student prefers a home lunch, you may send that with them. A number will be created for each exchange student that eats in the cafeteria. Please send an email to Pam Carmons (CarmoPa@tulsaschools.org) or Donna Witt (WittDo@tulsaschools.org) (ZIS/EIS Cafeteria manager) so that they are aware.

SCHOOL SUPPORT

- You are the visiting student's parents. As the Tulsa parent, be sure to check on homework.
- We are in constant contact with the chaperones and the exchange students. If there is a school related problem, we will let you know. Please do not worry about scheduling parent/teacher conferences for your exchange student.
- Call the school if the host student must be absent.
- Contact the classroom teacher if your exchange student is having difficulty of any kind. Emily Rouse/Jennifer Starr, the chaperones, ZIS/EIS 5th grade teachers, counselors, and administration are always here to help you when needed.

TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL

- Your exchange student will do as your own student does, ride a school bus, walk or be driven to school.
- If your exchange student is going to be riding the school bus with your own student, you will need to make the same arrangements ahead of time as you do for your own student (i.e. My Way Home form, which will be due in the fall).
- When riding in a school bus tell the host student that they are not to stick their head or any other part of their body out the window, or yell or scream in the bus.
- For the first few days, point out the various rules of safety such as **wearing seat belts** when in a car, crossing the street only at crosswalks, and that our traffic signals indicate a green walk sign when it is time to cross the street.

SCHOOL ORGANIZED EVENTS

- Some of these activities will be only for the exchange students. It is important for the students and their chaperones to have time together as a group.
- If there are trips that are organized by the chaperone and there is a cost (ex. the zoo), then the chaperone will pay for these events. Your exchange student may want to bring extra money for spending.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

- Please log eight volunteer hours per day for hosting your exchange student. After your period has ended, you can log the total volunteer hours as one entry.

We sincerely hope that this will be one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences for your family. Again, we at Zarrow and Eisenhower want to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to you for your generous hospitality toward our exchange students. They will cherish many fond memories for the remainder of their lives. The Zarrow/Eisenhower student exchange programs would not be the great successes that they are without families such as yours.

BUENA SUERTE AND MAY OUR ADVENTURE BEGIN!