

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Criteria For Teenager Exchange Visitor Programs

These criteria govern the Department of State designation and monitoring of Exchange Visitor Programs. These programs are designed to give foreign teenager students an opportunity to spend from six months to a year studying at a U.S. high school or other educational institution.

The student is placed by the Exchange Visitor Sponsor with a U.S. family which serves as the host family during the period of sponsorship. The primary purpose of these programs is to improve the foreign student's knowledge of American culture and language through active participation in family, school and community life. A secondary purpose is to improve American knowledge of a foreign culture and to contribute to international understanding through personal experiences in schools and communities throughout the United States.

Eligibility for Sponsorship

Only nonprofit organizations and institutions which have received tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code will be designated as Exchange Visitor Program sponsors for teenager programs.

Selection

1. The designated sponsor must assume responsibility for the selection of students to participate in these programs. Employment or travel agencies either in the United States or abroad shall not be used under any circumstances for the recruitment of foreign students.
2. Selection will be limited to secondary school students or recent graduates between the ages of 15 and 19 who have a sufficient knowledge of English to enable them to function in an English-speaking environment. Students should be screened for demonstrated maturity and ability to get maximum benefit from these programs.

Agreements

All provisions of the agreements between students, their parents and sponsors must be written if possible in both English and the students' native languages.

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The terms of such agreements must be specific stating clearly the total cost of the program, refund policies and program rules and regulations. The sponsors are responsible for assuring that these terms are fully understood by students and parents/guardians.

Orientation

1. Orientation, both predeparture and upon arrival in the United States, must be provided to all students. The orientation should be designed to give the students basic information about the United States, its people and family and school life. Students should be fully informed of the nature of the program in which they are participating. Sponsors are encouraged to include returnees in predeparture orientation sessions.
2. Orientation must also be provided to host families in advance of the students' arrival. Each host family should be well briefed on family and school life, customs, religion and mores in its exchange student's native country. Each family should also be apprised of potential problems in hosting an exchange student and provided with suggestions on how to cope with those problems.
3. Students must be provided with an identification card which includes 1) the name and telephone number of an official of the sponsoring organization, 2) the name and number of the Exchange Visitor Program, and 3) the address and telephone number of the Facilitative Services Staff, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.
4. In addition, students and host families must be provided with a copy of the "Criteria For Exchange Visitor Teenager Programs."

Health, Accident and Liability Insurance

1. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that every student selected to participate in the program has appropriate medical coverage. Minimum acceptable coverage must include 1) basic medical/accident of \$2,000 (per injury or illness), 2) preparation and transportation of remains to home country (at least \$1,500), and dismemberment coverage.

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2. Coverage may be provided in any of the following ways, with the Department informed of the sponsor's choice:
 - a) By health and accident coverage arranged for by the student.
 - b) By health and accident insurance coverage arranged for by the sponsor.
 - c) By the sponsor assuming all financial responsibilities for a student's illnesses and accidents from the time the student leaves his/her home country until he/she returns home.

Geographical Distribution

Sponsors must develop plans to ensure that groups of students, especially those of the same nationality, are not clustered. Every effort must be made to have the students widely dispersed throughout the country. No more than four foreign students and no more than two of the same nationality may be placed in one high school by a sponsor.

Placement of Students in U.S. Schools

1. No organization sponsoring this type of exchange program shall place a student in secondary school without first notifying the principal or superintendent or school board and obtaining approval for the admission of the student. Sponsors must make clear arrangements with school authorities regarding any tuition payments or waivers of tuition.
2. Placement of the student in a secondary school should be arranged at least five weeks in advance of the student's departure from the student's native country. In any event, such placement must be made before the student's arrival in the United States.

Placement of Students in U.S. Host Families

1. The designated program sponsor is responsible for the selection of the American host family. A program sponsor's representative must personally interview and visit the home of each host family before that family is permitted to receive an exchange student. Telephone interviews are not sufficient. Employment agencies shall not be used, under any circumstances, for the placement of exchange students.

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2. The student shall not be asked to perform the duties of a household domestic under any circumstances. However, students should be made aware that they may be asked to assist with some of the normal daily chores (keeping their rooms neat, helping with the dishes) which all of the members of the household must do.
3. The American host family should have at home during nonschool hours at least one family member, preferably a teenager, to assure the exchange student of some companionship.
4. Sponsors must make every effort to assure that a student is placed with the family which promises the greatest compatibility for the student. Such arrangements should be made well in advance so that the students and their hosts have ample time for correspondence before the students leave their home countries.
5. Sponsors should notify students of their home placement at least five weeks prior to their departure for the United States.
6. A host family should be given the background data and arrival information about the student at least five weeks prior to the student's arrival in the United States.
7. Home placement must be made before the student's arrival in the United States. Noncompliance with this requirement can result in immediate suspension or revocation of exchange visitor designation.

Supervision

1. The sponsor must assume the responsibility of resolving problems including, if necessary, the changing of host families and the early return home of the exchange student because of personal or family difficulties.
2. Sponsors must contact students and their host families periodically throughout their exchange visit to ensure that problems are dealt with promptly and effectively. These periodic contacts should include personal meetings with students.
3. The sponsor must provide the host family with a copy of the identification card furnished each student (see 4.c.) as well as with the names, address and telephone numbers of both local and national officials of the sponsoring organization who can be contacted at any time in case of an emergency or other problems.

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4. Sponsors must solicit written evaluations of the exchange program from students and host families at the termination of the exchange visit. Student evaluation should include discussion of host families, host schools, area representatives, orientation programs and suggested improvements.

Employment

Students in the teenager program are not permitted to accept full-time employment during their stay in the United States. However, noncompetitive small jobs, not to exceed 10 hours per week, such as tutoring, grass cutting, baby or people sitting, newspaper delivery, etc., will be allowed.

Financial Responsibility

1. A sponsor must guarantee return transportation for students in the event of a default by their organization. This may be done by the purchase of round trip charter tickets, the purchase of round trip tickets on regularly scheduled flights, or a combination of the two. Alternatively, a sponsor may arrange a surety bond or surety trust agreement with a bank to ensure return transportation.
2. Sponsors are required to have available for review by the Department of State an audited financial statement of their operations. The financial statement should include an itemized list of the salaries of the officers of the organization.

Reports

Sponsors will furnish the Department of State with an annual report on their programs at the end of each year. A questionnaire will be sent to sponsors each year to assist them in preparing the report.

Suspension or Revocation of Exchange Visitor Program Destination

Sponsors who are found to be in violation of the above criteria are subject to having program designations suspended or revoked in accordance with Section 63.16 of the Regulations Governing Designated Exchange Visitor Programs.

The Governing Board recognizes that personal contact between students of different countries promotes global awareness and international understanding. Letters, computer links, visits and student exchange programs all can benefit students and the community at large.

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As no country can isolate itself from the rest of the world, it is important that communications and understanding be fostered through knowledge and appreciation of each other's language and customs. Those students from another country who live and study in Tracy benefit from the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of another culture. The community of Tracy and district, in turn, benefit from the opportunity to learn about other cultures through interaction with exchange students.

The Tracy Joint Union High School Board of Trustees also supports the exchange programs by accommodating, when appropriate, the travel of students to study in other countries. The students who travel elsewhere shall meet with school administration and counselors prior to departure to sign an agreement to ascertain what the student is expected to do to insure the student's success after return to Tracy's schools.

Ultimately all students, including exchange students, are held to the same standards of academics, conduct, and attendance. For incoming exchange students their educational needs shall take precedence over the granting of a regular High School diploma. Each incoming exchange student will receive either a regular diploma or an honorary diploma at the completion of one year of study in 12th grade in Tracy's High Schools.

With Board approval, a district school may establish a sister-school relationship with a school in another country.

Student Exchange Programs

The Board welcomes the enrollment of foreign exchange students participating in programs that meet criteria established by the United States Information Agency for teenager exchange visitor programs. The Board further encourages district students to take any opportunities they may have to participate in such programs and study in another country.

To ensure that district facilities will not be overcrowded, the Superintendent or designee may limit the number of foreign exchange students to be accepted at any district high school during any school year.

The district shall incur no financial obligations when sending or receiving foreign exchange students. Program sponsors shall provide assurance of their responsibility for

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health, accident and liability insurance, the student's home placement, and the resolution of any related personal difficulties which may arise.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35160	Authority of governing boards
35160.1	Broad authority of school districts
51225.5	Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange students

Management Resources:

California Interscholastic Federation Bylaws: Article 2, Section 212