



# Student Handbook and Orientation Guide

# Welcome to Janesville, Wisconsin, USA!

We are pleased to welcome you into our program and we hope you enjoy all that this experience can offer you. Throughout your stay, you will have many new and exciting opportunities. Our staff is here to support you and do our best to ensure that this is a positive and enriching experience for you.

## About JIEP

The Janesville International Education Program (JIEP) promotes cross-cultural understanding between our community and those around the world through the implementation of strategic programming and curriculum for local and international students and educators. JIEP coordinates collaboration and interactions between the School District of Janesville and our international partners in education by organizing and managing programs that support our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreements. These MoUs contain the following objectives:

- Promote global education.
- Strengthen relationships and broaden international understanding and appreciation for each partner's leaders, teachers, students, community, and cultures.
- Encourage the development and exchange of cultural ideas and practices.
- Provide shared development opportunities for each partner's leaders, teachers, students, and community members.

These objectives provide a pathway for our local Janesville students, teachers, administrators, and community members to engage in international experiences, establish personal connections, share professional resources, and form new friendships around the world.

# JIEP Contacts:

As a JIEP student, you are supported by our School District, as well as a specific team of professionals that work with our international students. The program coordinator will be your primary contact for questions related to the program, host family, and daily questions that may arise. The international school counselor will provide support with topics involving school schedules, classes, college applications, and cultural adjustment. The program director works with the coordinator and counselor to oversee all aspects of the program.

Please make note of the contact information below!

## **International Program Coordinator:**

Mary Christensen

Email: [mary.christensen@janesville.k12.wi.us](mailto:mary.christensen@janesville.k12.wi.us)

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## **International School Counselor:**

Karl Bryan

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## **International Program Director:**

Dr. Robert Smiley

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## **China Office Director:**

Annie Wu

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# Emergency Information:

In the United States, the emergency phone number is 911, which will dispatch police and/or other emergency responders. It should ONLY be called for a life threatening or dangerous situation. Some examples include: there is an out of control fire, someone loses consciousness, someone is choking, there is a crime taking place, etc.

Please work with your host family to complete the list of other important numbers below:

<b>Local Police Non-Emergency Location/Phone Number</b>	
<b>Closest Urgent Care/Emergency Medical Facility Name/Phone Number</b>	
<b>Clinic/Doctor Facility Address/Phone Number</b>	
<b>Dental Facility Address/Phone Number</b>	
<b>Family/Neighbor Emergency Contact Information</b>	

# Pre-Departure:

## WHAT TO BRING:

Packing can be a challenge, so we have a suggested list of items. Make sure you plan carefully. It is a good idea to make a list and revise it several times. Keep a copy of the list on you as you travel because you may be asked about your items at the port of entry. If you forget something, don't worry because you can buy almost anything in the U.S.

- Clothing should be neat, clean and in good taste. Shoes are required to be worn at all times at school and should be appropriate for weather conditions and activities. Clothes should be the proper size and should cover cleavage, midriffs, and backs. Clothes cannot have any graphics or sayings that are derogatory, non-tolerant of others, or promote alcohol or drug use. Americans are more casual about clothing than you might be used to in your native country.
  - Sports clothing
  - Comfortable walking shoes
  - Personal garments
  - Raincoat/rain poncho/umbrella
  - Swim suit
  - Dress Pants or nice dress for semi formal occasions or ceremonies
- School Supplies
  - Backpack
  - Pen, pencil, notebook, and a folder for each class
- Miscellaneous:
  - Cap or hat for sun protection
  - Book or magazines to read during leisure time
  - Electric adapter
  - Medications if you are taking any (English instructions and physician's permission are required)
  - Be sure to carry your passport when you are travelling on the plane.
  - Spending money
  - Passport, visa, I-20 form issued by school
  - Items for sharing about your country such as coins, art, clothing, or photos

# Arrival:

When you land at O'Hare Airport in Chicago, after you have been through customs, you will be greeted by someone from the School District of Janesville with a JIEP or welcome sign. This person will guide you to a chartered bus for the drive to Janesville. This drive takes approximately two hours. When you arrive in Janesville, you will be picked up by your host family. You can unpack, freshen up and get settled in. You will probably be very tired and hungry from your long trip and the time change, so take some time to rest and to make a brief phone call home to let your parents know you arrived safely. It will be important to try to stay awake until it is bedtime that evening to help your body adjust as quickly as possible. You may experience a little culture shock and have difficulty with the language, which is normal.

### **CULTURAL ASSIMILATION:**

The first few days will probably be the most exciting, but may also be the most difficult. Everything is new and different. Even though you have prepared yourself for this exciting experience, you will have some adjustment periods as well. Some cultural shock is normal. It is best to acknowledge your feelings and talk with others about this. The term cultural shock is simply a way of describing the range of feelings experienced by anyone who leaves a familiar culture to live in a different and less familiar culture. The good news is, for most students, *culture shock is very temporary*.

During this time, it is even more important that you do not withdraw from people but become involved in school, family, and community activities. Your high school has multiple activities in which you can participate. You will be trying new foods, going to fun places and spending time with others that are up for the adventure! Make every effort to understand why people in your host culture behave as they do. This will help you to accept things which may seem strange and different. Avoid chatting, calling, or emailing home too often. Talking to your family and your friends back home may deepen your feelings of loneliness. It is important to focus on your experience in Janesville. Be positive and remember why you want to be here!

### **LANGUAGE SHOCK:**

English is to be spoken at the host family's home and at school, as much as possible. Practicing English outside of school will help you improve your English language skills. However, speaking English can be difficult and frustrating depending upon your English language capabilities. The first days will be the most difficult as you pick up colloquial terms in our area. Certain everyday verbal expressions are important to Americans. Two phrases you should memorize are 'please' and 'thank you.' People usually say 'please' before making a request of any kind. They also say 'thank you' to express gratitude, even for small favors. Add these two words to your English vocabulary, along with 'excuse me', 'you're welcome', and 'no thank you.'

At first it may seem impossible to speak and think in English all the time. Keep trying. In addition, many Americans seem to speak quickly, mumble, or slur their words; it is okay to ask them to slow down or repeat their words. You may very well be asked to do the same so your new friends and family can learn your language. If you feel you did not understand what was said in class, stay after class and speak with the teacher, or ask one of your new classmates.

Dealing with language shock is important. **Do not pretend to understand when you do not.** Watch for nonverbal cues of the person speaking. These cues can help you understand the language better. Study new words every day. Try not to speak in your native language. However, it is understandable if you want to occasionally speak to another student in your native language just to feel good. Remember, you will not improve speaking any language unless you practice speaking it every chance you get, especially with others who speak your native language.

## **Rules and Regulations:**

**Infractions of the rules below will result in immediate dismissal from the Janesville International Education Program and placement of your Visa in Loss of Status. Additionally, you will be sent home at your parent's expense:**

1. Students must abide by all laws of the United States.
2. It is against the law in the United States for school age students to buy or consume alcohol or tobacco/nicotine products. This law applies to all foreign exchange students as well. The legal age for buying and consuming alcohol or tobacco/nicotine products in the United States is 21.
3. Students are not permitted to hitchhike.
4. Students are not permitted to purchase, carry, or use firearms under any circumstances.
5. Students are not permitted to hold part-time jobs; there are strict rules governing employment for international students. A non-immigrant alien who accepts paid employment is subject to deportation. If students would like to earn spending money during their stay, they are permitted to hold small jobs (no more than 10 hours per week) such as baby-sitting, grass cutting and newspaper delivery.
6. Students are not permitted to drive any motor vehicle (including motorcycles, mopeds, snowmobiles, and cars) except during an accredited driver education class.
7. The stealing or taking any item or property of others is against the law and is strictly prohibited.

**Continuous failure to abide by the following rules along with the school rules may result in dismissal from the Janesville International Education Program and place your Visa in Loss of Status, and being sent home at your parent's expense:**

1. The legal age for buying, selling or possessing tobacco and nicotine products, including but not limited to cigarettes and vapor products, in the United States is 21. Smoking or vaping at school or anywhere in the state is not permitted for people under the age of 21. If you have indicated that you are a non-smoker on your application and you do in fact smoke, you will be placed on probation.
2. Students must always be aware of their responsibility as exchange students and as such, must make a determined effort to be a positive ambassador for their home country in their school, residence and host community.
3. Students must attend school daily unless sick and under a doctor's care or with special permission from the host family.
4. Students must complete all homework and assignments. Students must be full time students and maintain a "C" average or better in all classes. Failure to maintain a "C" average will result in academic probation.
5. Students are not permitted to visit such places as pornographic shops, adult theaters, drinking establishments, or any web sites related to pornography or gambling.
6. Students must show respect for their host families and participate in scheduled activities.
7. Students must follow host family rules and expectations.
8. Students cannot change host families at will.
9. Students may not have sexual relationships or sexual contact with others, nor openly display affection.

In addition to the rules and regulations stated above, all students enrolled in the School District of Janesville must comply with the District's handbook, found here: [SDJ Student & Parent Handbook](#). Please take time to review this handbook prior to arriving in Janesville.

## Student Conduct Agreement:

As a reminder, all JIEP student participants and their parents have signed and submitted a Conduct Agreement. Please note the following reasons that could result in dismissal from the JIEP program:

1. General misconduct or violation of any program, school, host residence, local, state, and/or federal rules
  - a. Including but not limited to: drug, alcohol, tobacco use
2. Unexcused absences from school
3. Not meeting academic expectations
4. When a student's mental and/or physical health is in jeopardy

If a student is dismissed from the program, the cost of returning to the home country must be paid by the natural parents. No refund of program fees will be issued when a student is dismissed due to misconduct, attendance or academic issues.

## Cancellation:

Sometimes issues arise that result in a student needing to return to his/her home country unexpectedly. These issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Generally, if a student departs from the program in good standing, a refund of program fees may be granted.

## Holiday Travel:

There are two major breaks during the school year when classes are not in session, the winter holiday break, which occurs in late December through early January, and spring break, which usually occurs mid-March. Students are permitted to travel home during those breaks with permission of their natural parents, but must schedule travel when classes are not in session. Look at the school calendar before scheduling flights! Any absences for travel outside of the break may not be considered excused.

Although travel to the home country is permitted, transportation costs and arrangement are at the expense of the student's natural family. Host families or JIEP are NOT required to provide transportation to/from the airport for holiday travel.

Unsupervised travel to locations other than the home country are not permitted and therefore not endorsed by the School District of Janesville, host families, or JIEP.

## Living with a Host Family:

Your host parents have the same responsibilities as your natural parents at home. They are responsible for your health and safety, and they want you to feel comfortable in their home. They also want you to feel like a family member and participate in family life.



Every family is different, and your American host family will do some things differently from your natural family. Home, customs, and routines might all be different and new for you.

Discussing certain things will make your transition easier. Discuss each item below **together with your host parents.** Check the boxes and write notes in the spaces provided.

### Food

- Tour the kitchen. Where are food, utensils, and cleaning supplies kept?
- If there is a dishwasher, practice turning it on.
- Are there specific meal times? \_\_\_\_\_
- What types of meals are typical?
- What are your host parents' expectations for you eating meals together with others?
- Can you prepare food yourself?
- Is food allowed in bedrooms?

### Laundry

- Tour the laundry area. Practice turning on the washer and dryer.
- How often is laundry done? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are colors and whites done together or separately?
- Are underwear and other clothes done together or separately?

### Transportation

- How will you get to and from school?
- If you will take the bus, discuss routes and pick up times.
- Host parents can drive you places sometimes, but not always. How much advance notice do your host parents like when you ask for a ride?

### Scheduling Standardized Testing (TOEFL, SAT, IELTS, ACT...)

- How many weeks in advance should you discuss test scheduling with your host parent?
- Can your host parent provide transportation for you?
- Is another student taking the same exam and may want to carpool?

### Homework

- Where and when should you complete homework assignments?

### Chores

- What chores are you responsible for? \_\_\_\_\_
- When should you do them? \_\_\_\_\_

### Bedtime

- When is bedtime? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What expectations are there for mobile phone use in the bedroom?
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Waking up

- Who is responsible for waking you up in the morning?
- What time do you need to get up in order to get to school?

### Socializing

In many American families, children must ask permission to go out to socialize with friends or to invite friends home.

- What are your host parents' expectations? How should you inform them of your plans?
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### Smoking and Vaping

- Is smoking or vaping allowed anywhere inside or outside the home?

### Family Outings

What are your host parents' expectations for you participating in the following?

- Recreational activities and restaurants?
- Visits to relatives in other cities?

### Conflict Resolution

Small disagreements and conflicts are inevitable in every family.

- When issues arise, discuss them openly with your host family. How and when do your host parents prefer to discuss issues?

## School:

### **School Day**

8:00 AM - 3:28 PM

### **School Calendar**

The school calendar is available online here: [2020-21 School Calendar](#)

Please note, it is VERY IMPORTANT to check the school calendar before scheduling any travel or events that may cause you to miss a day of classes.

## **Attendance**

School attendance is mandatory. Students may miss school only for acceptable reasons, such as illness, religious observances, university visits, field trips and other school-related excursions. Host parents must call the Attendance Office at 743-5230 for any absences. Absences for unacceptable reasons are “unexcused” and can result in disciplinary consequences.

When a host parent knows in advance that a student will miss school, they should obtain a *Planned Absence Form* from the Attendance Office. It should be completed and returned to the Attendance Office before the absence. Students are responsible for getting all assignments before pre-planned absences.

## **Course Schedule**

You will create your academic course schedule together with your counselor. Your courses are selected based on your college goals and your personal goals. Your schedule will balance challenging subjects with new subjects that you might not have had before.

## **Language Immersion**

When you experience being immersed in an English-speaking classroom for the first time, it can be shocking. It’s a bit like jumping into a swimming pool. The water initially feels quite cold, and everyone else in the pool seems to already know how to swim while you are still learning.

Tips for navigating language barriers:

- Whenever you don’t understand something, ask for help.
- Keep a language notebook and write down new English words and phrases and questions you have.
- Find fun ways to practice speaking English at school, such as joining a team or club or sitting with classmates at lunch.
- Think of your teachers as swimming instructors. They *want* you to learn to swim, and they are happy to teach you. They won’t swim for you, but they will show you how.
- Be confident that your English will improve over time. It might be frustrating at first, but you will adapt and learn. Be patient and you will be swimming along with your classmates in no time.

## **Can You Help Me?**

In U.S. schools, students are expected to take an active role in their own education. U.S. teachers assume that students understand the lesson material unless the students tell them otherwise. It is your responsibility to raise your hand and ask for help when you need clarification.

If you don’t feel comfortable raising your hand and asking for help in front of the entire class, speak to your teacher personally. Teachers commonly use email to communicate with students, so obtain each teacher’s email address and send them your questions. You can also meet with your teachers in-person in a one-on-one setting. Some teachers have

designated periods during the school day when they don't have classes and are free to assist students. Other teachers may be available before or after school or during lunch.

Tips for seeking help:

- Remember that it is your responsibility to ask for help. Teachers know that you are in a new environment and they will respect your initiative and courage when you speak up.
- Practice asking for help during class and after class.
- Schedule regular meetings with your teachers for assistance or feedback. Come prepared with a list of questions or topics you wish to discuss.
- Do not wait until the day before an exam or assignment deadline to ask for help.

**Practice the following phrases with classmates and teachers:**

"Can you please help me?"

"Can you please repeat that?"

"I don't understand \_\_\_\_\_. Can you please explain it to me?"

"I understood part of what you said, but not everything. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?"

"How do you spell that?"

"Could you write that down for me?"

"Can you give me an example of using that in a sentence?"

### **U.S. and International Classmates**

Friendships are one of the most rewarding aspects of your time at school. Each person will have a different experience when it comes to making friends. You might find that you're the only international student in a class, or there might be several other international students.

Sometimes it can be positive to be with other international classmates. They can provide a sense of comfort. Being with other international classmates in class can also potentially benefit your studies. For example, you might help each other understand classroom activities or study together before exams.

However, having international classmates can sometimes be negative. How? Well, it would certainly be a problem if you distracted one another during class, for example, joking or talking. Teachers are not necessarily bothered by international students occasionally speaking in their native language, especially if it helps both students learn, but if it distracts from the lesson then it is rude and disrespectful.

It can also be negative if international students rely on each other too much. During class, if you don't understand something, you might ask one another for clarification instead of asking your teacher. By avoiding asking your teacher for help, you would miss opportunities to practice your English with your teacher. Relying too much on international classmates can also indirectly slow the process of making new friends. You develop relationships with U.S. classmates every time you ask them a question, work together on an activity, or have a conversation with them. Over time, those relationships can turn into friendships. Simply put, the more you interact with your U.S. classmates, the sooner you will make U.S. friends.

## Conversation Starters

It can be intimidating to start a conversation. Below are some questions you can use to start.

“My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What is your name?”

“I just arrived to Janesville from \_\_\_\_\_. How long have you lived here?”

“I’d like to practice speaking English with someone. Would you like to eat lunch together?”

“Are you in any clubs? Can you recommend a fun one?”

“I want to buy a \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know a store?”

“I would like to learn about American music. What bands do you like?”

“Where are you applying to college?”

“Would you like to try \_\_\_\_\_? It’s a popular food in my country.”

## Homework

Homework is common. Some homework assignments are done on paper, while others must be done electronically and turned in electronically. Many teachers use Google Classroom to assign and collect homework. Students are responsible for checking Google Classroom.

Each assignment is due by a certain date, known as a “deadline.” Some assignments are graded, and that grade is factored into the final semester grade. Other assignments are not graded. If an assignment is not graded, students are still expected to complete it.

Most homework is done *at home*. However, teachers occasionally give time in class to begin homework. Teachers will inform students whether they may work together on assignments or should work alone.

### Homework Tips:

- Before the end of each class, make sure that you understand your homework instructions. If you don’t understand something, ask for clarification.
- Find a quiet place to do your homework that is free from distractions.
- Get in the habit of doing your homework regularly.

## Assessment

Teachers assess students in different ways. Some assessments are “formative,” meaning that they evaluate how students are learning particular material *while* students are learning it, for example, an initial draft of a research paper. Other assessments are “summative,” meaning that they evaluate the extent that students have mastered the material *after* students have learned it, such as the final draft of a research paper. Formative and summative assessments have deadlines, and missed deadlines impact students’ grades.

Certain summative assessments can be retaken if students wish to improve their grades. However, before students can retake a summative assessment, they must complete specific required tasks, known as the “Ticket to Retake.” Students who wish to retake a summative assessment are responsible for completing the Ticket to Retake tasks within a timeframe determined by the teacher.

## **Grade Reporting**

Students can receive grades for daily homework assignments, formative assessments, and summative assessments. All can contribute to your course grade. Your course grade can change frequently throughout the quarter. Students can check Infinite Campus to see grades for all their assignments. Infinite Campus also shows missing assignments.

Report cards are prepared quarterly. Semester grades for each class are recorded on transcripts at the end of semesters 1 and 2. Semester grades are permanent and can not be changed after the semester ends. Semester 1 transcripts are sent in January to every college that students apply to. Semester 2 grades are sent to every college in June.

## **Cheating and Plagiarism**

Cheating is prohibited, as it is all over the world. Some common forms of cheating include: using notes, books, or websites during tests; copying work; having others do your work; and obtaining test questions or answers before tests. Additionally, it is cheating if students share work when a teacher has stated that each student must complete work independently.

Plagiarism is a specific type of academic dishonesty. According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2017), the verb, “plagiarize,” is defined as using “the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own words or ideas.” If a person takes information from a book, online resource, or other copyrighted material and uses it in his/her own work without citing the original source, that person is plagiarizing. Plagiarism can be intentional or accidental.

## **Mobile Phones**

International students often find it helpful to use dictionaries and translators on their mobile phones. These tools can be very convenient; however, relying on these tools too much will actually hinder your English language acquisition. Using an electronic translator might make it easier for you to read English texts a little faster, but it will not improve your overall English ability. Reading the text slowly without the translator, however, *will* improve your English.

## **Field Trips**

Teachers organize field trips to different locations away from school to reinforce material learned in class. For example, an art teacher might arrange a field trip to a museum, or a business teacher might organize a field trip to a bank. Field trips can last a few hours or they can take an entire day.

Students must obtain host parent permission to go on a field trip. Several days before the trip, teachers typically give students a “permission slip” that students take home for host parents to sign, and then students bring the signed permission slip back to school.

## **Lockers**

Your locker combination: \_\_\_\_\_

## **School Cafeteria**

Students have the choice of bringing lunch from home or buying food in the cafeteria. Each international student has a lunch account with money already in it. You may use up to \$6.00 per day. During the semester, if students use more than \$6.00 per day, their accounts will eventually become \$0.00. After that, students must pay for their own lunches.

## **Practicing Healthy Behavior**

Living in another country can be physically and emotionally challenging. It is important that you practice healthy and safe behaviors in and outside of school so that you have a productive time in the United States.

- Eat regular, nutritious meals and drink lots of water.
- Get enough sleep each night (at least 8 hours).
- Stay home if you are sick. Do not go to school and spread your illness.
- Manage your stress level.

## **Nurse**

Students feeling ill during school may visit the school nurse. If students need to take medication during school, the medication is kept by the nurse, and students must go to the nurses office (or Assistant Principals' office) when they need their medication.

## **Relationships**

Romantic relationships are regarded differently in every culture. In the U.S., older teenage students are typically permitted to have "boyfriends" or "girlfriends." However, it is important for you to know that displaying physical affection, such as kissing, is not allowed in school. Sexual relationships are not allowed at all.

## **Attire**

Students' attire should be appropriate for school and not interfere with the teaching and learning processes in the classroom.

- Clothing and jewelry promoting alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or gangs are not allowed.
- Clothing which has objectionable pictures, sexual meaning, or is otherwise offensive, is not allowed.
- Crop tops and short shorts are not allowed.
- During P.E. classes, students must wear athletic attire, not jeans or other street clothes.

## **School Resources**

*Teachers* are happy to help with academic questions. Often they can help during class, but if they are too busy during class, you will need to schedule time with them outside of class. Face to face is the best way to communicate with teachers, but email is also useful. Teachers use email regularly, so it is important for students to get into the habit of communicating with them through email.

*Counselors* help students with college applications. They also help with various social and emotional issues, such as when a student is homesick or has a conflict with another student.

*Librarians* help students navigate the library and locate resources for research assignments. They can also help with computer related problems.

The *principal and assistant principals* are primarily responsible for school administration. They are also available to help students with other things.



# Health and Safety:

Your personal health and safety are priority topics that our organization takes very seriously. We want to ensure that you enjoy your experience to the fullest, and in order to do that, you need to be well.

If you are feeling physically ill, or are injured, notify someone right away. If you are at home, tell your host parents. They will determine if you need to see a healthcare professional. If you are at school, tell your teacher or ask an adult to see the school nurse or athletic trainer. The nurse or trainer will contact your host parent and/or the program coordinator to determine the next steps in your best interest. Also, it is important to notify your natural parents if you receive medical care. You can work with your host parents to maintain open communication regarding your health.

Struggling with your emotions, or mental health, should also be taken seriously. The JIEP international counselor is trained to work with students facing emotional or mental health struggles. This is nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about, so if you are not feeling like yourself, or just need to talk to someone, reach out for help.

The topic of safety ranges from keeping your personal belongings safe to maintaining healthy relationships and interactions with other people. Below are some scenarios regarding safety and what to do if you feel unsafe:

- Never share personal information (name, date of birth, passport information, address, pictures) with strangers, **ESPECIALLY ONLINE**. If you receive a request regarding your visa status, travel documents, etc., contact the JIEP coordinator and/or the JIEP international counselor immediately. **DO NOT SHARE YOUR INFORMATION.**
- Do not carry large amounts of cash. Your host parents will help you open a bank account and can help you determine an amount of cash that is acceptable and culturally appropriate to keep in your wallet.
- Traveling on your own is not recommended and can be very dangerous. Never leave your host family's house without letting them know where you are going, who you will be with, and when you will return. Many families use an app to know where other family members are at all times.
- **Sexual contact between adults and children under the age of 18 is illegal and a very serious crime. Unwanted sexual advances or acts are also very serious and should be reported if they occur. This includes requests for inappropriate pictures, explicit texts or conversations, inappropriate touching, threats or intimidation. If you have been a victim of sexual abuse or if you feel uncomfortable, contact the JIEP coordinator or the JIEP international counselor, the school principal, the local police at 608-757-2244 or child protective services at 608-757-5200.**

**Connect with us and share your experience!**

**Online: [jiep.info](http://jiep.info)**