



Guidelines for Sponsoring Exchange Programs, Coordinators, and Students

- The number of exchange students will be limited based on capacity.
- The exchange program must be a full member in good standing with The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET).
- All parties must consistently adhere to the Gulf Shores City Schools Board of Education policies and procedures.
- Gulf Shores City Schools Board of Education only accepts students with a J-1 Visa as we are not authorized to accept students participating in F-1 programs.
- Exchange programs must have a local coordinator who resides within 50 miles of Gulf Shores High School (GSHS) and who will be responsible for students placed at GSHS.
- Gulf Shores City Schools will not approve any placement with a temporary, welcome, or arrival host family. Local coordinators are expected to seek out permanent host families who are committed and fully prepared to host the exchange student for the entire academic year.
- Students cannot have graduated from or otherwise completed the required educational programming in their home country.
- Students will not be classified as seniors nor will they be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. This should be communicated by the sponsoring program and coordinator to prospective students to avoid any confusion.
- Students must be at least 15 years old and no older than 17 years old on September 2 of the enrollment year.
- While the district understands that there will be some language barriers, the student is expected to be proficient in both written and verbal English so that the student can be successful in all coursework.
- Students will be assigned a full course load including a course in English, history, science, and mathematics. Students are expected to maintain at least a “C” in each course including electives throughout their exchange year in order to retain their placement in the school.
- Students are expected to abide by the policies and rules of the school, district, and the Alabama State Department of Education. Exchange students who are noncompliant will not be permitted to continue their program year at GSHS.
- Only full-year students will be considered for placement in GSHS. No student will be enrolled for a single semester including emergency placements. Students are expected to be here on the first day of school and stay until the last day of school.
- Only students with a host family residing in Gulf Shores City Schools district are eligible for acceptance. If a student must change host families during their exchange year, the new host family must reside within Gulf Shores City Schools district, and the local coordinator must notify Maria Hawkins (mhawkins@gsboe.org) immediately of the change in status

Application Procedures

The application period is **March 1 to July 20** to be considered for enrollment for the following school year. No applications will be considered outside of this date range.

- All applications must be submitted to Maria Hawkins (mhawkins@gsboe.org) via email and copied to Dr. Stephanie Harrison (sharrison@gsboe.org). No faxed applications will be accepted, nor will the district log into a separate system to access application materials.
- Each application should be sent in a separate email. One email should not contain multiple applications.
- The application should be complete and should include at least two references for the student along with their English language proficiency results and birth certificate. The application should also include the name, physical address, and contact information for the host family and the local coordinator. The entire application and all supporting documents should be in English.
- Please allow four weeks for the application to be reviewed by the principal and returned to the local exchange coordinator.