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Dear International Youth Exchange Program Organizations,

The Birmingham Public Schools recognizes the value of international youth exchange programs that enrich our high school communities and provide a positive “American” experience for exchange students participating in the program.

The Birmingham Public Schools has adopted The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) Model School Policy for the acceptance of international exchange students.

### **NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

The Birmingham Public Schools shall strive to accept international exchange students each year. The number of international exchange students that each high school will accept and the timing/deadlines for the process may vary. Guidelines suggest a middle ground that recognizes both the needs of schools and the exchange programs, with a maximum of 1% of the Senior Class population, given that we accept only 12<sup>th</sup> graders, being comprised of exchange students.

### **TIMING OF PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The Birmingham Public Schools asks that exchange organizations contact the district each year to indicate an interest in placing exchange students. Exchange organizations shall provide the Birmingham Public Schools with advance notice of their intent to place.

- The Birmingham Public Schools is to be notified as soon as Student and Host Family placements are confirmed.
- Recognizing the timing of school staffing and resourcing, exchange organizations should submit Student and Host Family applications as early as possible **Starting in April of the said year** to assure placement of qualifying exchange students. **No applications shall be accepted later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of July before the start of the said school year.**

### **SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

The Birmingham Public Schools reserves the right of final approval on all student placements. Additionally, the Birmingham Public Schools will require that each individual student exchange program must:

- Be listed in the most current CSIET Advisory Full Listing.
- Maintain a network of qualified and trained local representatives, living in or near the community, with responsibility for each student - including orientation and ongoing support for both the host family and student.

- From the local representative to national headquarters, the program will provide continuing hands-on monitoring and responsiveness for the following: student selection and preparation; selection and screening of host families including CSIET guidelines for exchange student safety; ongoing contact with host family and student; and communication with the school and responsiveness to school and student needs.
- Receive enrollment authorization for placements each year and follow district policy on timing and requirements.
- Screen and prepare exchange students, monitor their progress during the school year, and respond to issues or problems if they develop and find solutions without involving the schools.
- Personally interview and screen all potential host families, matching student and family interests and personalities. Arrange host family placements before exchange students leave their home country.
- Exchange students are expected to be with their host family and school placements before the first day of classes.
- Not knowingly place exchange students based on their athletic abilities.

The student exchange organization shall provide the Birmingham Public Schools with a complete student application which includes the following:

1. Personal letter from the student.
2. Detailed information on student and natural family, including host family placement preferences.
3. Name of host family and their application to exchange organization.
4. Proof that the student has sufficient language ability to function in an American classroom. The ELTIS test is the districts preferred English proficiency testing standard with a minimum total Raw score of 40, **Proficiency Level 5**.
5. Original transcript of student's high school grades, with English translation (and this must meet school requirements).
6. Birth Certificate original in English or with official translation.
7. Necessary medical history, including proof of all immunization as required by the school district, any medical/physical restrictions and a recent physical exam with proof of required immunizations.

### **SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS ON J-1 VISA SPONSORSHIPS**

- Student **may not** have graduated from high school in his / her country.
- Student upon enrollment may not have exceeded the age of eighteen (18) years and six (6) months.
- They must be enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Each exchange student must be qualified to participate in regular classes and maintain a typical schedule. The student must have an acceptable level of proficiency in the English language, a commitment to treat coursework as important, and the social skills to enjoy participation in social and extra-curricular activities.
- International exchange students must be aware that participating in interscholastic athletics means they must comply with district and state athletic eligibility regulations, and that many teams require try-outs.

- The school appreciates the difficulty of a student's acclimation to a different language, culture and institution; however, exchange students are expected to attain passing grades by the end of their first trimester.
- Exchange students' enrollment eligibility will be for one year only. Exchange students and host families are expected to know, and must follow, all school policies and enrollment guidelines.
- Exchange students must reside with the approved district host family to maintain eligibility for enrollment in the Birmingham Public Schools.
- Exchange students must have medical and accident insurance that meets or exceeds U.S. Department of State guidelines.
- Since there is wide variation of graduation policies in the United States, exchange students will receive only an honorary diploma if appropriate.

### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Students on U.S. State Department-sponsored programs (J-1 visas) pay no tuition, but they are expected to pay all normal expenses, including standard course and extra-curricular activity fees. The school has no obligation to provide any special services, tutoring, supplies or equipment.
- International exchange students have all rights and privileges accorded to community students - EXCEPT the right to a standard high school diploma.

Applications from international exchange students for consideration of acceptance by the Birmingham Public Schools may be sent electronically to [ssardy@birmingham.k12.mi.us](mailto:ssardy@birmingham.k12.mi.us). *They must be received no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of July and no earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April.* Applications must contain all the documentation as outlined under School Expectations of Student Exchange Program, #1-7. Applications meeting the standards as outlined by the Birmingham Public Schools for international youth exchange students, will be reviewed and approved by the Enrollment Coordinator/Supervisor.

Once approved and authorized by signature, the exchange program will be notified. The exchange organization will notify the host family and direct them to complete enrollment or contact us for help with enrollment. The host family will be required to complete the enrollment by establishing district residency according to district requirements regardless of siblings and meeting with the exchange student's counselor to set up a class schedule.

If you have any question regarding the process for acceptance of international exchange students into the Birmingham Public Schools, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Sardy  
Enrollment Coordinator