



# **FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

**Pittsford Central School District  
Student Services Department  
75 Barker Road – East Wing  
Pittsford, NY 14534**

**585-267-1023**

**2023-2024 School Year**



# **Pittsford Central School District**

## **Foreign Exchange Program**

### **Rationale**

Youth exchanges provide Foreign Exchange students with an American perspective, giving them a balanced understanding of our country. They encourage new perspectives in Pittsford students open their minds to an increasingly diverse world, and offer students on both sides of the exchange benefits in personal development. The Pittsford Foreign Exchange Program helps our students:

- Gain cross cultural experiences and learn firsthand about diversity, new perspectives and customs;
- Create life-long friendships across cultures;
- Gain new perspectives on our diverse world;
- Begin to understand how tightly connected the peoples and countries of the world are to each other; and
- Offer an understanding of other languages and cultures particularly with respect to personal and professional opportunities within a global society.

### **General Provisions**

The Pittsford Central School District recognizes the following organizations as sponsoring organizations for the exchange of students: (as of September 2022)

1. The Association for Teen-Age Diplomats (ATAD)
2. Youth for Understanding (YFU)
3. Rotary International (scholarship programs)
4. International Student Exchange (ISE)
5. International Cultural Exchange Services (ICES) (fee based agencies)
6. USA High School (CIEE), AFS Intercultural Programs
7. International EXPERIENCE (iE)
8. Ayusa Global Youth Exchange
9. Education First (EF)
10. CCI Greenheart Exchange
11. Cultural Homestay International
12. ASSE International Student Exchange Programs

These agencies have undergone a rigorous application process, and are allowed to recommend sponsored students to the District. (See Process for Agencies to be accepted by PCSD, p. 10)

The District will consider other sponsoring organizations, dependent upon capacity to add Foreign Exchange students. Applications from new organizations must be approved by February 1st of the school year preceding a requested placement.

Only students associated with recognized organizations can submit applications for acceptance. Applications for Foreign Exchange students must be submitted by March 1 of the school year preceding the year of requested attendance. The District reserves the right to work with exchange organizations that have proven their responsiveness and their willingness to adhere to Council for Standards for International Exchange Travel Standards (CSIET) and State Department Regulations. The District also reserves the right to distribute opportunities for placements among the various sponsoring agencies as deemed appropriate.

Pittsford Central School District retains the right to determine the number of Foreign Exchange students to be accepted, will be determined by the District based upon enrollment, class schedules and capacity to support students within the high school (grades 9-12).

### **The Sponsoring Agency**

The sponsoring agency is legally responsible to the U.S. Department of State and:

- Shall ensure that all State Department Regulations governing teenage exchange programs are adhered to;
- Shall make every effort in the student/host family selection process (including interviews) to assure a maximum degree of compatibility;
- Shall provide exchange students and host families with all CSIET-required orientation resources prior to arrival;
- Shall provide appropriate support services, including orientation, counseling, and tutoring, and a process in the event of termination; and
- Shall guarantee the opportunity to Pittsford students to participate in their exchange program.

Secondary Student Exchange visitor programs designated by the Department of State must:

- Require all exchange students to be enrolled and participating in a full course of study at an accredited academic institution;
- Allow entry of exchange students for two academic semesters within the same school year.;
- Receive permission from Pittsford Central School District, in writing, that the student may attend, in advance of leaving their home country;
- Ensure sponsors are adequately trained and supervised, in accordance with U.S. State Department guidelines;
- Place no exchange student with their relatives;

- Make no monetary payments or other incentives to host families;
- Adequately screen and select all potential host families, and meet the guidelines on the standard application form as identified by U.S. State Department Guidelines.
- Identify and select host families, with a preference to those who have a student attending either Mendon High School or Sutherland High School (any accepted Foreign Exchange student will attend the same school as the student of the host family).
- Conduct host family orientations after the host family has been fully vetted and accepted by the sponsoring agency, and then approved by the PCSD;
- Maintain a monthly schedule of personal contact with the exchange student, the first of which should be in person;
- Conduct a visit to the host family within the first two months of placement in the home;
- Provide the District with status reports of student experiences on an agreed upon basis.
- Provide the contact information of the local representative (sponsor) to the Director of Student Services;
- Ensure that the sponsor is not knowingly a party to a placement based on athletic abilities;
- Refrain from publicizing the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, and advertisements, that are not sufficiently in advance of the exchange student's arrival, or promote or recruit for programs in any way that compromises the safety, privacy or security of the participants. Any publicity identifying PCSD must be approved in advance by the District;
- Meet reporting requirements and deadlines by the U.S. Department of State.

A SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) generated form DS-2019 is required when applying for the J-1 visa. This form is completed by the program sponsor and must be signed by the Director of Student Services. This form acknowledges acceptance to the Pittsford Central School District's Foreign Exchange program.

### **The Students**

A Foreign Exchange student in the Pittsford Central School District must meet the following criteria:

- Be sponsored by an approved sponsoring agency;
- Have prior written acceptance as a student at Pittsford Central School District by the Director of Student Services or the Superintendent of Schools;
- Have demonstrated in their home school a level of scholastic achievement to indicate success in Pittsford High Schools;

- Provide records and credential for review by the Director of Student Services, and the building principal prior to admission;
- Be at least 15 years of age and no older than 18 years of age upon arrival;
- Have sufficient command of the English language to function effectively in an academic and community environment;
- Have health and accident insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the U.S. Department of State guidelines;
- Provide proof of required immunizations as required by the State of New York or give permission to be immunized upon entry.
- Display maturity, good character, and the desire to adhere to the objectives of the program.
- Participate in an orientation upon arrival in the U.S. as consistent with the policies and guidelines of the US Department of State.
- Enroll in a full course study and attain passing grades.
- Complete all school assignments and examinations required in the academic courses in which they are enrolled.
- Conform to established standards of acceptable behavior and to the rules, regulations and Code of Conduct of the District;
- Understand that participating in interscholastic athletic teams means they must comply with District and State athletic eligibility regulations, and that many teams require try-outs; and
- Understand that they will be provided a transcript and certificate of attendance upon completion of an approved course of study, and that the District will not issue a school diploma.

Students who meet the above criteria and are accepted into the Program will officially be considered exchange students by the Pittsford Central Schools and eligible for appropriate privileges and recognition. A student's program may be terminated at any time by school officials for failure to abide by established guidelines including:

1. Failure in two or more courses of study; or
2. Failure to adhere to established rules, regulations and Code of Conduct of the District or the U.S. Department of State; or
3. Excessive absences.

### **The Host Family**

The Host family selected and recommended by the Sponsoring Agency, must be approved by the Principal in collaboration with the Director of Student Services. The District requires that the hosting family have at least one child who is a student in District high school. The host family must acknowledge in writing the receipt and acceptance of the following guidelines and regulations:

- Must live within the boundaries of the Pittsford School District high school that the Foreign Exchange student will attend;
- Must provide the student with board, separate bed and personal study areas. Standards for living arrangements must conform with 22CFR, Regulation 62.25;
- Must maintain open communication with the program advisor and the school liaison in matters relating to the student;
- Must confirm with program advisor and school liaison that the student has health and accident insurance coverage;
- Will treat infractions of school regulations by an international student in the same manner as they would be treated with local students.

### **The School District**

The Pittsford Central School District will:

- Review the application packet with a team of school officials by March 31<sup>st</sup>;
- If application is accepted, the Building Principal will sign the enrollment form required by the sponsoring agency;
- The Building Principal will inform the foreign exchange liaison that the student is enrolled, and provide enrollment information;
- Make sure every effort is made to place the exchange student in courses that comply with their school's academic requirements and which are appropriate to their English language fluency;
- Provide the exchange student with the same benefits (in accordance with U.S. State Department Guidelines), both curricular and extracurricular, and support services that are afforded to local students;
- Place students at the grade level according to their appropriate age;
- Treat infractions of school regulations by an exchange student in the same manner as they would treat local students; and
- Forward all appropriate and required school transcripts and records of the exchange student to their home school within a reasonable time of the student's departure.

Foreign Exchange students completing their program at the District will be issued a certificate of attendance, not a high school diploma. The District does not allow Foreign Exchange students to enroll in the Driver Education Program. ENL (English as a New Language) services will not be provided to Foreign Exchange students.

### **The Foreign Exchange Student Interscholastic Athletic Participation Policy**

- The Athletic Director must report any Foreign Exchange students to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association using the Foreign Exchange Student Reporting Form;
- Students who have graduated from the secondary school system in their country are ineligible for the interschool athletic program;
- No member of the school's coaching staff or athletic director shall serve as the host family;
- School districts may apply for a waiver if the student is living with a member of the school's coaching staff or athletic director and if the student has not played the sport competitively;
- A Foreign Exchange student may be immediately eligible the first year in residence and be limited to one-year eligibility provided the student is a participant in an established foreign exchange program accepted by CSIET and complies with all State Education Department and NYSPHSAA standards. Students not in a CSIET program are subject to Rule. The Athletic Director will refer to NYSPHAA guidelines in such instances;
- The Foreign Exchange program must assign students to host families by a method that ensures that no student, or their parents, school or other interested party may influence the assignment for athletic or other purposes. The student may not be placed related to their athletic interests or abilities;
- Students participating in athletic activities will be required to furnish the personal equipment needed for sport programs.
- A Foreign Exchange athlete must provide the school nurse with the following upon enrollment at the high school:
  - A completed physical exam form dated according to NY state guidelines;
  - A completed Pittsford Central School District sports questionnaire.

### **Fall Sports**

If a Foreign Exchange student wishes to try out for a fall sport and will not be in the District during the time of try-outs, the following process will occur:

- The student will be given a three-day try-out in the sport of their choice,
- If the Foreign Exchange student athlete's skill level is such that they would have made the team, the coach will place the Foreign Exchange student on the team
- The Foreign Exchange athlete will need to meet the NYSPHSAA minimum practice requirements before they are eligible to participate in athletic contests.

### **Winter/Spring Sports**

A Foreign Exchange student wishing to participate in an interscholastic winter or spring sport must follow the same procedures as District students.

### **Financial Provisions**



Foreign Exchange students attending Pittsford Central Schools will not pay tuition, however, they will be expected to pay all normal expenses, including standard course (field trips, AP fees, etc.) and extracurricular activity fees. The school is under no obligation to provide any special services, tutoring, supplies or equipment.

### **The Pittsford School Liaison**

The School Liaison is the person within each high school who is responsible for Foreign Exchange students The School Liaison will:

- Be appointed by the high school principal;
- Be paid a stipend consistent with the Pittsford District Teachers Association contract;
- Act in accordance with the responsibilities and guidelines established by the U.S. Department of State.
- Help Foreign Exchange students orient to the Pittsford School Community including linking the student with the counselor, to help ensure that the courses are appropriate for their ability and knowledge of the English language;
- Act in support of the student as they navigate the high school, providing a copy of the handbook, the Code of Conduct, and other necessary documentation to assure a smooth transition;
- Coordinate welcoming and farewell events for Foreign Exchange students and host families;
- Conduct pre and post evaluation with each Foreign Exchange student involved at the District.

### **Process for Agencies to be Accepted by the District**

In order for a Foreign Exchange Program to be recognized and accepted by the Pittsford Central School District, it must meet the following criteria:

1. The program must agree to and adhere to Pittsford Central School District Foreign Exchange procedures and guidelines which are in alignment with the requirements of the U.S. Department of State regulations 62.25.
2. Have submitted a complete application, by February 1st the school year preceding the placement which has been considered in light of the above criteria, and has been approved by the Superintendent of Schools. All Foreign Exchange Sponsoring Agencies will be asked to resubmit applications every five years, to ensure compliance and adherence to current State Department Guidelines.

### **Application Process**

A Sponsoring Foreign Exchange Organization may apply to be recognized and accepted by the District by sending a letter of interest to the Director of Student Services with a copy of its program policies and procedures.

The Director of Student Services will review the request, seek additional information if needed, which may include an application if the organization meets the above guidelines as determined in the telephone interview, and make a recommendation for approval or non-approval to the Superintendent.

The District policies on Foreign Exchange are consistent with the policies and recommendations of the U.S. Department of State.

Revised 12/12/23



Appendix A.

**Acceptance of Pittsford Foreign Exchange Guidelines by Sponsoring Agency**

This form serves as acceptance of the rules, regulations and guidelines of the Pittsford Central Schools Foreign Exchange Program. The form must be submitted to the Director of Student Services at the address listed below.

Name of Sponsoring Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

As Program Advisor for (Name of Student) \_\_\_\_\_ from  
\_\_\_\_\_ who is attending (Name of High School) \_\_\_\_\_  
from (dates) \_\_\_\_\_.

I accept the guidelines as stated in the PCSD Foreign Exchange Program document.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Second Signature of Contact (Supervisor) or Program Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

Director of Student Services  
75 Barker Road  
Pittsford, New York 14534

Appendix B

**Acceptance of Foreign Exchange Student by Pittsford School District and Building Personnel**

This form serves as acceptance of the application of the Foreign Exchange student listed below. When complete, this form should be sent and kept on file by the Director of Student Services for final approval. The High School Foreign Exchange Liaison is responsible for the completion of this form.

I have read the application and accept this student for the \_\_\_\_\_ school year/semester.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Student Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Host Family \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

High School PSHS or PMHS (Circle one)

Dates of attendance in Pittsford \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Sponsoring Agency Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Foreign Exchange Liaison \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Building Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Director of Student Services \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the Student Services Office.