

Household Ground Rules (complete in weeks 1-2)

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FVL recommends that families lay out “ground rules” shortly after student arrivals to prevent misunderstandings down the road. Students and host families should complete this worksheet together within the first two weeks of the student’s arrival.

Names and Nicknames

1. What should the student call their host parent(s)?
2. What should the host family call the student?

Meals and Food

1. What do meals and eating times look like on an average weekday?
2. What do meals and eating times look like on an average weekend?
3. Is the student responsible for making their own breakfast?
4. What snack foods are available?
5. What are the rules for eating between meals and food in the refrigerator or pantry?
6. What foods are available to take to school for a packed lunch?
7. Are there rules about where the student can and cannot eat?
8. What are expectations for food preparation and clean-up?
9. Does the student or anyone in the family have a special food allergy or restriction?

Communication

When and how is the student expected to communicate with their host parents about their location, plans, and transportation needs?

Chores

(similar to what you would assign to your children)

Many appliances, electronics, and bathroom fixtures work differently here than they do in other countries. Review these common things together (include things like what not to flush down the toilet).

1. What chores will the student be responsible for on a regular basis?
Explain when and how each chore is to be completed along with the location of supplies.
2. What jobs are shared around the home? (cleaning up after meals, bathroom . . .)
3. Is the student responsible for their own laundry?
If so, explain the process you want used and how to use the machines. It may help to do it with the student the first few times. If someone else will do the laundry, be sure to set the expectations of when and where the student should put the laundry.
4. What is expected with keeping the bedroom tidy?
If the student is to wash his/her own sheets, vacuum the bedroom floor, or other duties, be clear on frequency, process, and location of supplies.

Curfew

1. Is there a set curfew for weeknights?
2. Is there a set curfew for weekends?
3. Does the student need a key or code to enter the house?
4. What is the procedure for locking the home?
5. What happens if a student cannot make it home prior to curfew?

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Friends and Neighborhood

1. Can the student invite friends over to the home? If so, what are the circumstances? Is advance notice required, and if so how much?
2. Can the student go for a walk or run around the neighborhood? Are there days, times, or areas when that should be avoided?
3. Let the student know to ASK before leaving - rather than just leaving.
4. Is the student allowed to stay overnight at a friend's house? What information is needed prior to this happening?

Phone, TV, and Internet Use

1. What is the access code for the internet?
2. Are there any rules/guidelines to be followed regarding
 - internet, computer, or printer use?
 - mobile phone use?
 - watching TV/movies?
3. How late can the student use the TV? Phone? Internet?

School

1. What are the student's school hours?
2. How will the student get to school each day?
3. What time does the student need to be ready to leave for school?
4. How will the student get home from school?
5. Students are encouraged to get involved in school activities. Who will pick them up after the activities? How should the activities be communicated?
6. Can the student get rides from friends?

Religion

1. When will the host family attend church services?
2. What should the student wear?
3. How long do services last?
4. Does the student have any requests regarding religion?

Money

The student should not borrow money from the host family.

1. Did the student bring a debit/credit card?
2. How can the student withdraw cash? Who will take them to get cash and when?
3. How will the student pay for their expenses (phone plan, school fees, entertainment . . .)?

Habits and Routines

1. When do parents leave for work and come home?
2. What time do most family members go to bed? Parents? Children?
3. What is the usual routine for using the bathroom/shower? (This is especially important with a shared bathroom.)

Dating Guidelines

Are there household dating guidelines that the student needs to know?

Non-Food Allergies

Does the student have any non-food allergies of which the host family should be aware?