

Host Family Handbook



Ryukoku @ MHCC Winter Program

SOME THOUGHTS ON HOSTING

Living with a family will probably be one of the most significant factors in helping your guest student learn about and understand the culture of the United States. The homestay offers perhaps the most supportive environment of learning and testing new skills in intercultural interaction. Just as your student will be anxious to learn about his/her new family, we know that you are likewise interested in your student and will extend a warm welcome. Of course, you and your student will find many opportunities to make cultural "mistakes" in the homestay situation, but you are most likely to learn from whatever mistakes you make. As a family, you can also provide the further benefit of acting as an extremely accurate cultural informant, demonstrating U.S. values and norms, as well as common language usage.

You will benefit most from your hosting experience by being **OPEN MINDED, OBSERVANT, & SENSITIVE** to both verbal and non-verbal cues, and by seeking assistance when you are unsure of what to do. And remember, a sense of humor always helps.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE STUDENT

It is important to offer your services or explanations a couple of times until you are able to determine what your student really wants or means. Often students will act as if they understand when they really don't. An ex-student recalled how he took cold showers for the first number of weeks because he did not understand the directions for using the faucet the first time and was too embarrassed to ask again. Never assume that your student understands everything!

ACADEMICS AND ACTIVITIES

The students are going to attend EFL class in the morning Monday through Friday. They are also encouraged to participate in the daily life and activities of their host families. There are some field trips that the students are required to participate during the week and weekend. Host families are encouraged to participate in these field trips. These are great opportunities to be involved with your student as well as get to know the other students in the group and their host families. There are also some activities planned by MHCC Japanese language students in the weekday afternoons.

SOME RULES TO REMEMBER

DRIVING

It is a program policy that students cannot drive any type of vehicle in the United States.

TRAVEL

Students cannot leave the country after arriving in the U.S. Exceptions may be made for the students to travel home in the case of an emergency.

RELATIONSHIPS

It is possible that some students will start dating while in the U.S. and some of them might become involved in more serious relationships. Students must not get engaged or married while in the U.S. Additionally, students must not become pregnant or cause a pregnancy while here.

MONEY MATTERS

Host families will receive a stipend shortly after the completion of the program. The stipend is meant to offset expenses incurred by hosting a student and is not intended for financial gain. Families should provide students with two meals a day, including beverages, as well as the basic living necessities shared by the entire family. Please be aware that should a student need to move, a prorated amount of the stipend will be used to cover expenses in their new living situation.

Students will pay for the public transportations and personal expenses such as toiletries, telephone calls, gifts for others, extra snack foods, etc. *It is highly recommended that you not involve yourself in students' financial situations, i.e. lending them money.*

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CONCERNS

When students become sick, we ask that you first help them determine if they should seek medical assistance or if it is something they can take care of at their homes.

If the student needs assistance for a non-emergency situation, he/she is advised to go to the Gresham Urgent Care Clinic (See information below). Gresham Urgent Care has walk-in service. They will most likely need your help to make arrangements for visits to the clinic and help with the logistics of filling out paperwork and prescriptions (however, you should not pay for the medication).

**Gresham Urgent Care
2850 E Powell Valley Rd. (at Burnside) Suite 100
Gresham, OR 97080
503-666-5050**

Students have travel abroad insurance during their time here. The name of the insurance company is JI Accident & Fire Insurance Co. Ltd. The phone number for Los Angeles Desk is (213)622-9582. If possible, contact the insurance company before students paying at the hospital to see if the insurance company can arrange payment to the care provider directly. If not, the students will have to pay up front and get reimbursed in Japan. For this, they must keep the doctor's documents, all receipts and get the claim forms filled out.

Please check with the program director if the doctor recommends tests or treatments that seem out of the ordinary.

****IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS KEEP AND BRING BACK ANY AND ALL PAPERS THEY RECEIVE AT THE DOCTOR. THEY ALSO NEED TO BRING IN ANY RECEIPTS OR PAPERWORK THAT ACCOMPANY PRESCRIPTIONS.**

EMERGENCIES

If the student becomes seriously ill or injured, he/she would need to go to the nearest medical facility as soon as possible. If something happens at school or during the scheduled activities, the program staff will generally be the first to respond. If something occurs outside the school or on weekends, the family will most likely be the first to respond. The program staff should be contacted and informed of the incident as soon as feasible, *but it is not necessary to check in with staff before seeking medical treatment for the student.* (Please be familiar with any allergies the student has and be sure the care provider is also aware.) The student should have his/her insurance identification card with them at all times. The name of the insurance company is JI Accident & Fire Insurance Co. Ltd. The phone number for Los Angeles Desk is (213)622-9582. If possible, contact the insurance company before students paying at the hospital to see if the insurance company can arrange payment to the care provider directly. If not, the students will have to pay up front and get reimbursed in Japan. For this, they must keep the doctor's documents, all receipts and get the claim forms filled out.

Students can be taken to any hospital's emergency room or urgent care clinic for immediate treatment. The following medical center is the closest to MHCC:

**Mt. Hood Medical Center
24800 S.E. Stark St.
Gresham, Oregon
503-667-1122**

CHALLENGES IN HOSTING

It would be false to say that challenges don't occur in homestay situations. We recommend that you make clear from the beginning, any "rules" or expectations you have for your student during their stay in your home. Students and families are encouraged to make an attempt to work out the minor misunderstandings that do occur. These are generally resolved by clear and open communication. However, if you feel you are having repeated difficulties with your student or a serious problem arises, please confer immediately with the program staff. We have found that language barriers and cultural misunderstandings are the causes of problems in many cases and can often be worked out. Such issues are better resolved sooner rather than later.

STUDENT & HOST FAMILY COMMITMENTS

The success of this program depends on the teamwork and cooperation between the staff, students and host families. It is necessary that all parties understand and comply with the commitment they make to one another. The following commitments outline these responsibilities and should be referred to if you become unclear of your role in the homestay program.

Program Staff Commitment:

1. The staff will provide an initial orientation and support for host families and students.
2. The staff will strive to keep host families well informed and will provide information about upcoming activities or events mostly by e-mail.
3. The staff will make all possible efforts to complete homestay arrangements and changes in an efficient, timely and sensitive manner.
4. The staff will provide hosts with a stipend for serving as a host family for the duration of the program.
5. The staff will serve as a resource for students and families with respect to the hosting arrangement.

Host Family Commitment:

1. All members of the household accept and welcome the guest student into the home as a member of the family, including him/her in family mealtimes and activities.
2. Host will provide a clean, healthy, and safe atmosphere for the student.
3. Host will have daily conversations in English and listening time available to the student including answering questions pertaining to homework and social/cultural issues.
4. Host will provide a bedroom (generally private that includes a bed, dresser, closet, desk and chair) and access to public areas of the house such as the kitchen, living room, bathroom, etc. Host shall also regularly provide clean linens and access to a washer and dryer.
5. Host should assist in providing transportation for the student when public transportation is not available. This may include transportation to some evening and weekend events.
6. Host's primary consideration in hosting a student should be cross-cultural exchange, not monetary gain. Students should not be made to feel that their stay will affect the financial stability of the home in any way.
7. Host will provide two well-balanced meals a day. This does not necessarily mean the host will *prepare* each meal, but food must be clearly available to the student.
8. Host will respect the culture, values and beliefs of the student.
9. Hosts will resolve any differences with the student in the best manner possible. Hosts having a serious conflict with their student will notify the host family coordinator/counselor who will advise the host as to how to bring resolution in a culturally sensitive manner.
10. Host understands that the staff reserves the right to intervene in the case of serious differences and/or remove the student from the home at their discretion and to request a prorated refund of the homestay period.
11. Host agrees to notify the host family coordinator immediately of any changes in the homestay situation (i.e., in case of death, divorce, separation, birth, adoption, marriage, loss or change of employment, or addition to your home of any adult over 18 years of age)
12. Host waives the right to privacy under the state/federal privacy acts in so far as this program may reveal the host's address and telephone number for the student's business purposes only. (Students, agencies, doctors etc.)
13. Host agrees not to have or use any illegal substances in the home while the guest student is living in the home, and to use moderation in the consumption of alcohol.

Student Commitment:

1. The student will read the host family commitment and understand the obligations host families have to the students.
2. The student understands that host families receive a stipend to help *offset* costs of hosting a student. Host families do not profit financially from hosting a student.
3. The student understands that hosts are not to be depended upon for all special transportation needs but will assist when they are able.
4. The student will spend an adequate amount of time with the host family and attempt to participate in various family activities and outings.
5. The student will respect the culture, values and beliefs of the host family.
6. The student understands that the staff is responsible for housing decisions, which may include moving a student to a new host family.
7. The student will attend and warmly participate in all classes and all required group activities.