

Adapted from *School Partners Abroad* Materials by Pamela Valentine 2011

Hosting Tips:

Pre-Arrival

- Learn as much as possible about your student's homeland.
- Write to your student immediately.
- Familiarize yourself with his/her language.
- Prepare a "Welcome Kit" to give to your student upon arrival. It can include a small address book with helpful phone numbers and addresses, a map of your neighborhood, and directions to and from home and school.

Getting Acquainted

For the first night, a quiet evening is best. The visitor will be tired and will need to know only the basics, such as where to sleep, location and use of the bathroom, what time meals are served, etc. As some visitors are unaccustomed to having cats and dogs in the house, pets should be introduced carefully. The morning after arrival, visitors should be re-introduced to all of their host family members. It is helpful to write down names and try to address each other by them as much as possible so that the visitor can pick up everyone's name without the embarrassment of asking. Keep in mind that an overseas visitor will feel uncomfortable when they cannot remember names or are unsure of how to address someone.

The Household

Conduct a house tour during the first two days, to introduce the visitor to the following:

Laundry: Location of hampers, machines (how and when to use), hand laundry facilities (where to wash and hang up wet clothes). Ask immediately and as frequently as possible if the student has laundry to be washed. Inform the visitor of when laundry will be done and when it will be finished, or if the visitor will be expected to do his/her own laundry. Some visitors will be unaccustomed to clothes dryers, so they may not realize that a load of laundry can be washed and dried within a couple of hours.

Bathroom: Who uses it first in the morning; the best time to bathe or shower; the use of shower curtain, bathmat, towels and washcloth; whether the bathroom door should be locked; whether the door should be left open while not in use. In many counties the bath and toilet are in separate rooms. Since Americans use bathrooms for so many purposes, the visitor may need some orientation as to the use of an American-style bathroom, especially for the mornings when several people may need to use it in a hurry. It may be helpful if a mirror is provided in the visitor's bedroom.

Kitchen: Operation of stove, oven, dishwasher, garbage disposal and location of dishes, glasses, cutlery, coffee, tea, etc.

Bedroom: Where to keep clothes and personal belongings.

Trash: What to throw where, especially if materials are recycled. Show females where to dispose of feminine products.

Telephone, Stereo, TV, Computer & e-mail: House rules regarding usage.

Operation of switches: Location and use of main switches as well as lamp switches.

Explain the household routine including:

- **Daily and weekly schedules:** Wake-up/bedtimes, curfews, homework and meals.
- **Household chores:** Making beds, changing sheets and house cleaning. Explain that the host family members do these chores also.
- **Security and emergency procedures:** Location of emergency telephone numbers and fire escapes.

Orient the visitor to the location of the host family's home in relation to the school, downtown shopping areas, homes of other group members and physical landmarks by providing or explaining the following:

- Clear instructions and **map** for getting home (including home address and telephone number).
- What to do if lost (list of emergency numbers).

Meals

At mealtimes, the visiting student may seem quiet and may be shy about "digging in" or asking for seconds. **Offer second helpings several times.** (In Japan it is good manners to refuse the first one or two times.) Meals should include food usually served to the family-nothing special or unusual. If the student seems confused about the use of tableware, napkins or how to eat unfamiliar foods, explain and demonstrate.

Indicate whether snacking and "raiding the refrigerator" are acceptable practices in the host kitchen. Encourage visitors to feel at home and to get things for themselves.

The host families should know whether they or the school will be responsible for arranging the students' lunches for field trips on school days. (See the schedule.)

Language

- Although language is the most obvious cultural difference, it does not have to be a barrier. Be yourself and keep a sense of humor!
- Speak **slowly and clearly**. Always check to make sure that the message was understood and, when in doubt, write it down.

- Explore alternative words if the student does not appear to understand.
- Avoid asking "Do you understand?" and "yes" or "no" questions. The student may answer "yes" out of a desire to please even if he or she does not understand.
- Encourage the student to ask questions.
- Learn a few phrases in the student's language. A little effort goes a long way.
- Keep an appropriate foreign language dictionary handy. Install Apple app "imi wa?"

Planning Activities

Always explain and even write down, if necessary, the day's activities. Explain where you are going why.

In advance, explain what to bring along on any outing, such as a camera, a sweater, money for souvenirs, snacks or admission, etc.

Remember that participants usually bring limited amounts of cash with them. (This will vary by student.)