



**Handbook for Host Families and Hosted Students
of
St. Croix Lutheran High School**

Introduction

St. Croix Lutheran High School uses God's Word to educate the total student: spiritually, intellectually, and physically in a caring Christian community.

In a desire to access this type of education for their children, some parents need to rely upon host families to partner in the parenting and caring for their children while they attend SCLHS.

This handbook is to serve as a guideline for host families and students but is by no means an all inclusive document. Host families and students are encouraged to communicate with the international advisor or principal, the student's family, and the student to ensure a positive experience for all involved. When appropriate, different guidelines have been established for international students.

Please also keep in mind that the international advisor may at some point contact the host parent regarding a student's experience. Please do not take this personally. We encourage students to openly communicate with the international advisor regarding their homestay experience. Occasionally, students need an adult to help them communicate their questions or concerns. The international advisor fills that role for the student.

Host Families

By being a host family, you are being asked to treat this student as a member of your family. Explain expectations as a family member to the student at the beginning of the school year. A written plan is an appropriate way to communicate your expectations to the student. It is understood that every family has a different set of rules and procedures. The hosted student, as a member of the host family, is expected to follow these rules and procedures. The student's family is expected to support the host family's rules and procedures. Some things to cover during that meeting might be:

- Procedures for room cleaning, changing bed linens, etc.
- Family meal times and expectations for preparing and cleaning up after a meal
- Curfew and quiet times
- Dating guidelines
- Phone (both house and cell phone) and internet use and restrictions
- Television use and restrictions
- What expenses are not covered by room and board and will be charged to the student – i.e. long distance phone call charges

- How to schedule needs for transportation
- Financial arrangements: where have they set up banking, allowances, money restrictions, etc.
- The hosted student and his/her family will provide the host family with a list of emergency contact numbers and desired procedures. These numbers should be reviewed and verified.
- Where and how out of season items should be stored. (Home stay students are allowed to store items over the summer in the school storage areas. They are limited to 3 large, plastic storage bins. Cardboard boxes are not allowed.)

Have regular monthly meetings with the student to provide both you and the student with a forum in which to discuss difficulties and concerns. A checklist for the monthly meetings is provided in this handbook.

What to do when a child is ill:

- For host families will need to make medical decisions with the student for minor illness: flu, cold, etc. The student is encouraged to call their home to let their parents know they are ill and what has been or needs to be done. Major illnesses should be brought to the attention of the parents directly by the host family. The host family should also provide the international advisor with any necessary information. If the student is 18 years old or older, they can legally make their own medical decisions. The international parents are required to provide release statements for their student and each student is required to have medical insurance, each as verified by the office of the International Advisor. Host families will receive a copy of their home-stay child's insurance and emergency medical release. Host families should always ask the student and the family about any food or pet allergies.

Accommodations:

- It is highly desirable that each student have their own room; however, a shared room arrangement is acceptable.
- Ask your student to provide a listing of food likes and dislikes, food allergies, etc.
- The students should keep their room area clean and the student and host family should determine procedures for room cleaning during the initial family meetings.
- If a host family will not be able to supervise a student for an extended time, i.e., a family vacation or event, the host family should make arrangements, in consultation with the student, for alternate supervision. This could mean bringing in someone to your home to supervise or finding another family for the student to stay with during your absence. Please inform the school of your plans in case we need to make an emergency contact. The host family is expected to compensate the supervising party with a minimum of \$21.50 per day if the student stays in a different home. If a supervising party is brought into the home, compensation should be determined by the host family.

- Provide internet access. This is required for basic homework assignments as well as communication, via e-mail and messaging to families. Host families need to set appropriate limits on computer usage, in a formal discussion with the student at the beginning of the host family experience.
- Learning to speak English is an important goal for each international student. Home-stay families are to provide an English and culturally rich environment for the home-stay student.
- Have monthly meetings with the student to discuss issues and concerns. A checklist for this discussion is included at the end of the handbook.

Communication

- Be patient and repeat yourself over and over again. Do not be frustrated by repetitive and monotonous communication.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. Speak slower not louder. Allow longer for responses. You will be able to watch as the student processes the vocabulary and sentence structure in his or her head.
- Your student may be exceptional at English or may be a beginner. Make a consistent effort to check up with them and draw them into conversation, but understand that feedback is sometimes minimal depending on personality, English ability, and the awkward teenage years.
- Use charades and act out meanings when appropriate. Smiling often and being positive covers a variety of communication barriers.
- For clear communication with students who are learning English, avoid using contractions like “shouldn’t, can’t and we’ll.” Also avoid slang terminology and be aware of expressions like “the glass is half full” or “raining like cats and dogs” and enjoy explaining what these odd phrases mean.
- St. Croix staff will be in contact with your student’s parents or agent. Please contact Sue Galler at 651.455.1521 x.118 or sgaller@stcroixschools.org to update us about your student’s progress with learning and living.

Rules

- Set rules and communicate about them right away while taking nothing for granted. Students may be used to living very differently at home and need to know the clear expectations that you have for them.
- Students may be used to having a maid, smoking, keeping their own bedtime hours, having no scheduled time for homework, and coming and going without communicating. They are willing to adjust all of these habits in order to fit your family, but they need clear and consistent communication in order to understand.
- Students will likely need guidelines for computer, phone, and TV use. It is typical to have them help with chores as the dorm kids do once a week.
- Some students will need a number of rules and guidelines and other students will do fine with little suggestions and corrections. Find what is most comfortable and best for the success of your particular student.

Time Management

- Some students may have an easy time of managing their time and other students will require more help with structuring their time in order to be successful.
- Students may be able to thrive on less sleep, but most will need a bedtime, especially on the weekdays. Anywhere from 10:00 to 11:00 is what the residence uses on weekdays.
- Many international students stay up past midnight because they are expected to study late into the evening. You may enforce a bed time as you would for your own kids, if unsure, you can use as a guide the student's ability to get him or her self up in the morning and the ability he or she has to function at school.
- A designated homework time is helpful to most students.
- You will have a school calendar and can sign up for daily e-mail announcements so you are aware of the activities that your student is involved in and make any adjustments in dropping them off and picking them up from school.

Food and Activities

- You are responsible for all meals. You may purchase the public school hot lunch through St. Croix or work with the student to pack a bag lunch each day.
- Ask your student if he or she has any food allergies.
- Please include your student on all family activities as is comfortable and appropriate for you both.
- It is okay occasionally for your international student to get together with other students in the dorm. But please consider how often it occurs because we want them to use and learn English, it must work into your schedule, and it often adds a level of difficulty with supervision in the dorm. Consider suggesting that your international student invites a student from the dorm over at some point.
- Be aware of the four main events that the international dorm students do each year and think of bringing your student over for these activities. There may be some cost involved. Activities include: fall activity, spring activity, mid-autumn festival (early October) and New Year Festival (late February). Also, be aware of social events at school or other activities around the cities that may be fun for the whole family. It can be a tremendous amount of fun to show them your slice of America.
- St. Croix is developing a mentoring system with American/International students.
- Driver's training classes should not be pursued. Increased insurance costs, use of another's automobile, and potential liability make learning to drive a hazardous venture.

Spiritual Growth

- Most students will want to go to church with you because that is what your family does and it is a respectful thing to do and a way to learn about Western culture. It may even be good to have this as a regular expectation from the first week that they are with you. However, if your student objects to attending church, it may be best to gently encourage them but not require attendance.
- Each student is required to take a Bible class at St. Croix. They may be generally curious about the stories behind the Bible and how it comes into practice in everyday life. Explain family customs that you may take for granted like: Why you pray before a meal; What is the main purpose of worship

and communion; How and why Christians celebrate Christmas, Easter, New Year, and Thanksgiving.

- Students may not actively participate in prayers, songs, and many of the Christ-centered things that your family does, but encourage them to attend anyway, be respectful and learn about the Christian faith. Students may learn about God at first because they may use the knowledge to get a good grade in a required class, but the love that they experience through your family and the Word will plant a seed of faith for eternal life.

Tools for Extra Help

The following tools will be extra sources of information: Registration Schedule, School Calendar, sports information packets, daily e-mail announcements (sign up at SCL), and www.stcroixlutheranhs.org

Host Family Stipend and Conditions

Host families will receive a stipend for room and board for the student. SCLHS will determine the dollar value of the stipend. The student's family will pay the required fee to SCLHS and SCLHS will disperse the stipend to the host family on a monthly basis, at the end of each month. Host families need to be aware that most international students do not go home over the school breaks, due to distance. Occasionally, the student may travel home over a longer break, such as SCLHS has at Christmas. If the home-stay student does not travel over a break, the home-stay family does not receive an additional stipend. For international students, the home-stay stipend includes in-school lunches and cultural activities. The stipend is paid for September through May. The stipend is \$330 for August and \$630 for the remaining 9 months totaling \$6,000.

St. Croix appreciates the flexibility that you have in providing for your homestay student. Typically, students who begin a homestay program are expected to stay with you for the duration of the school year. However, St. Croix may remove a student from a host family without prior notice, during which time the host family will only be compensated for the weeks of housing that have been provided to the student.

Monthly Meeting Checklist

Use the checklist as a guide for your monthly meetings with your hosted students. This list is to serve as a guide. Host families will need to add items to discuss relevant to their unique concerns.

- Review of grades
- Review of achievements over the past month
- Questions or concerns regarding:
 - ✓ Attitude
 - ✓ Personal hygiene
 - ✓ Participation in family activities and chores

- ✓ Participation in church activities
 - ✓ Participation in school activities
 - ✓ Eating or nutrition
 - ✓ Overall health
 - ✓ Curfew
 - ✓ Rules violations
 - ✓ Cleanliness
- Review upcoming events for the next month.
- ✓ Home
 - ✓ School
 - ✓ Church
- Others



Homestay Students

Homestay students are expected to:

- Follow family established rules as determined by the host families.
- An important goal for any homestay student is to grow in English proficiency. If a homestay student does not demonstrate an interest in speaking English and involving themselves in English speaking activities, they may be removed from their homestay privilege.
- Communicate transportation needs well in advance and as often as possible, making arrangements in advance on their own. This includes itinerary for airport departure and arrival times.
- Communicate problems or concerns with your host family. Don't let little problems grow into bigger issues. If you are feeling ill, inform your host family right away.
- Contribute to the family by being willing to perform and take part in family chores and activities.
- Budget for seasonal clothing and personal care items. The student will need to communicate with the host family when items need to be purchased and arrange a mutually agreed upon time to go shopping for those items.
- Maintain a good academic standing.
- Read the SCLHS Handbook so that you understand the policies and rules of our schools.
- Ensure that host families are receiving appropriate repayment for costs above and beyond the usual room and board. For example, if you use the phone to make long distance phone calls, the family should be repaid for the expense.
- Be a willing participant in family activities. Your homestay family will ask you to attend various activities with them as part of your American experience. Be cooperative and respectful of their requests for you to participate.
- Seek assistance for homework needs or problems from the classroom teachers.
- Become a member of the student body by becoming involved in activities at SCLHS. The student is encouraged to join co-curricular activities, intramural activities, and attend school events such as dances, games, concerts, plays, and other special events.
- International students should notify the school if they intend to return to SCLHS by the beginning of March of each school year and complete registration materials.
- All students must live in a host home that has been approved by the school. International students will be placed in a host homes by a committee of the president, principal, and international advisor.
- International students should notify the school if and when his/her parents make a visit to see them in the United States. The faculty and staff of SCLHS would like the opportunity to meet your families.

- Students must provide the host family with all necessary contact information: home phone number, emergency numbers, and e-mail. It is especially important that the host families of international students have a family e-mail since this will be the primary way the host family will have to communicate with parents or guardians.
- International students must provide proof of medical coverage for treatment in the U.S. This is a requirement of the U.S. Government for all students on an F-1 Visa. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to determine their insurance needs. A copy of your policy card must be on file with SCLHS and your host family.
- Host families will be provided access to the student's grades through the school web-site. Grades can be checked on a weekly basis and a hard copy of report cards will be mailed to the host family.



Participation in Co-Curricular Activities



Participation in extra-curricular/co-curricular activities is an important part of being a student at SCLHS. God expects Christians to make use of the academic, athletic, and fine arts talents He has given us. Participation in extracurricular activities is important for admissions to colleges. Students and their families should evaluate individual talents and interests and match them to the activities offered at SCLHS. Co-curricular activities offered at SCLHS are:

- Student Council
- Athletics: Football, Soccer, Volleyball, Cross Country, Tennis, Cheerleading, Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, Hockey, Softball, Baseball, Track, and Golf
- Jazz Band
- One Act Plays
- Dance Team
- Children's Theatre
- Musicals
- Speech Team
- Math competitions

Students are expected to follow all guidelines established by SCLHS and the Activities Director of SCLHS in regard to co-curricular participation. A complete list of rules and activities along with their descriptions is printed in the Student/Parent Handbook.