



Exchange Student GUIDELINES

Below is an outline of the steps required to get a student placed from the time of the student's first contact with PEACE until the time of his/her arrival. This process usually takes several weeks, and frequently months.

Host families go through a similar time line in the application, screening, and orientation process before they are able to host a student. They are anxious to hear from us about available students once they have been fully vetted and approved.

STUDENT PROCESSING TIME LINE

- ◇ STEP 1 International Representative (IR) provides exchange student (ES) with Pre-App. Student completes Pre-App.
- ◇ STEP 2 PEACE Headquarters (HQ) interviews student in English over the phone. IR interviews ES and parents.
- ◇ STEP 3 PEACE HQ pre-conditionally accepts ES and sends acceptance letter to ES via email.
- ◇ STEP 4 IR provides ES with full application. ES completes full app and pays the \$500.00 application fee.
- ◇ STEP 5 PEACE HQ evaluates student's full application for program acceptance.
- ◇ STEP 6 PEACE HQ uses student's information to create a DS-2019 draft and begins host family search.
- ◇ STEP 7 IR confirms that the info on the draft DS-2019 is correct.
- ◇ STEP 8 PEACE HQ signs final draft of DS-2019 and completes the I-901. SEVIS receipt is sent to student via email.
- ◇ STEP 9 PEACE HQ sends Travel Kit including host family application & pictures to IR.
- ◇ STEP 10 PEACE HQ mails ES a Travel Kit (contains important government travel documents and placement info).
- ◇ STEP 11 Student reviews travel kit and completes the DS-160 online. Student schedules Consular Interview.
- ◇ STEP 12 Student successfully completes consular interview, receives VISA and notifies IR. IR notifies PEACE HQ.
- ◇ STEP 13 HQ invoices final payment including air plan to IR and ES.
- ◇ STEP 14 PEACE HQ books student's flight and emails flight receipt to IR and ES.
- ◇ STEP 15 IR conducts pre-departure orientation with ES and parents and emails signed rules review to HQ.
- ◇ STEP 16 HQ purchases medical insurance and sends a copy to ES and IR.
- ◇ STEP 17 HQ forwards flight plans, Host Handbook, and other papers to Host Family (HF) to confirm student arrival.
- ◇ STEP 18 ES and parents phone host family 1-4 weeks before departure to reconfirm travel plans.
- ◇ STEP 19 Student starts packing and says good-bye to family and friends.
- ◇ STEP 20 Student departs country, ready to be greeted by his or her new family; headquarters on standby during travel.
- ◇ STEP 21 HF picks up their new international "son" or "daughter" at the airport. HF notifies HQ of ES arrival and pick-up.
- ◇ STEP 22 Host Parent takes student to school to register, set up schedule, and see if new TB test or vaccination required.
- ◇ STEP 23 HQ Counselor calls student. Local Coordinator (LC) visits ES to introduce his/herself and welcome ES.

With so many steps in the process and so many things that can and do go wrong, it's essential for all parties to expedite *their* roles. Otherwise, it will not be possible to have time for you to correspond with your host family- and make a calm and orderly preparation for your arrival

We hope that after seeing all that is involved with processing and placing *each* student you can better understand why it might seem like forever waiting for news. We simply don't have the time to update *everyone* as each step is completed. But, please feel free to call us for status if you think something is taking too long.

ProAmerican Educational And Cultural Exchange, Inc.

40 WATER STREET, SUITE 700, NEW PHILADELPHIA, PA 17959 (800) 377-2232

WEBSITE <http://www.peace-inc.org>

EMAIL> paz@peace-inc.org

ARRIVAL PREPARATION

STUDENT QUARTERS can be shared, but an extra bed, adequate dresser and closet space will be provided for you. You must help maintain the cleanliness of your space (not track dirt on carpet, not leave dirty glasses/plates in room, clean up shower and kitchen after use, etc.)

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING is a must. The Department of State mandates that students do not live in unsanitary or unsafe conditions.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT is handled by PEACE, but occasionally a host parent's assistance is needed. A school is sent the student's personal profile, transcripts, medical records, the host agreement, PEACE local rep and office contacts. No placement is final until the school approval. Host parents must personally take you to school to register immediately upon arrival. You should have all required vaccines to be admitted.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS are required of all PEACE students prior to their departure.

IMMUNIZATIONS (Polio, MMR, HIV, Vericella) are required prior to entry at all schools. If you have not received all required shots before departure, this service is expensive and is **not covered by student medical insurance!**

U.S. TRADITIONS, history, heritage, economic & political systems; social structure, and current events are things your HF and school will ask you about. Prepare to discuss these.

FLIGHT SCHEDULES are made by our main office. You can't be notified of departure itinerary before July, because airlines can't book round-trips sooner than 11 months before the return date. Host families must pick you up at the airport unless an emergency occurs. Your natural family must telephone the host just prior to departure to confirm all flight arrival details. The U.S. State Dept. requires students to have a round trip air ticket and requires PEACE to control student returns whether voluntary or involuntary.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

STUDENT BANKING should be with a savings account and an ATM card, not checking. Banks must file an IRS Form W8-BEN in lieu of a SS# for ID on the account. Your Host parents may encourage you to budget to help you manage money, **but may not hold or control your funds nor have access to your acct pin number.** *The law does **not** require adult cosigners on minors' accounts. If your bank is belligerent about this call us from the bank.*

SPENDING MONEY for personal wants and needs, such as school supplies, clothes, make-up, pictures, souvenirs, entertainment and phone calls are your responsibilities. PEACE recommends that you bring from \$30-50/week for regular spending needs plus \$1000+ extra for gifts, emergencies, events like ski weekends, school trips, & proms.

Lending money between students and host family members, or hosts' controlling student bank funds or using their ATM card is strictly forbidden.

More Financial Issues

SCHOOL LUNCHES should follow the host family's habits. If host parents usually give their own children money for a hot lunch, then they should do the same for you. If host children bring a bag lunch from home then you should, too. Any additional purchases of food at school beyond what the host can afford is the responsibility of the ES.

LONG DISTANCE PHONE CALLS are your responsibility. We recommend debit card which pay in advance instead of after a call. PEACE is not responsible for charges the host allows made to their phone and you should not abuse this privilege. To call direct out of the USA dial 011+ country code + city code + local number. Long distance (00) operator can help you find codes. Get yourself on an international discount plan or you will be **OUTRAGEOUSLY** overcharged.

WINTER CLOTHES. are something you may not have - or need when returning home - if coming from a tropical climate. While you are expected to have money to purchase these items, You can borrow coats from friends or family to help you save money.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

ACCIDENT/ SICKNESS INSURANCE, carried by PEACE on all students for program duration, is NOT TOTAL HEALTH CARE. Besides the basic government. required \$100,000 of coverage, PEACE carries an extended major medical up to \$300,000. Additionally, Repatriation and Medical Evacuation expenses are covered in full.

Not covered: IMMUNIZATIONS, sports physicals, Pre-existing conditions; dental maintenance; eye-glasses; pregnancy; alcohol or narcotic drug related accidents or illness, car accidents if auto insurance pays; high speed or high risk recreational activities, and other named perils excluded on the policy. **READ POLICY CERTIFICATE FOR DETAILS.**

Go to our insurance company website site to register and file a claim. Refer to policy and certificate ID# on claims. Mail form to address on ID card or certificate page in your manual. Call our insurance company (phone # on student medical ID) to learn if a specific activity or risk is covered. This summary is not complete; see policy details.

AUTHORIZATION TO A TREAT A MINOR FORMS signed by your natural parents, plus your medical records are provided to HF. *Natural* parents assume responsibility for deductibles, co-payments, excess charges, and non-covered costs on this same form, too.

Non-Emergency use of emergency room costs \$350. You should keep your PEACE ID and Health card in your wallet at all times. It includes another proof of insurance and parental authorization.

This is not the responsibility of PEACE nor is any other cost you may incur by being signed into a medical facility.

YOUR HOSTS ARE NOT YOUR COURT APPOINTED GUARDIANS AND SHOULD NOT SIGN FOR FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. Up to 30 days extension can be made at the student's expense if paid in advance.

PERSONAL ISSUES

RELIGIOUS freedom is a cornerstone of American constitution rights. While P.E.A.C.E. families and students are most likely to be active in the practice of their faith, they won't all worship God in the same way or belong to the same denomination.

You are here to learn American family life and to better understand the things most meaningful to us. For this reason, P.E.A.C.E. expects you to attend the host family's church some of the time, even if it differs from your own. Also, church youth groups can be a good way to make friends.

At the same time, P.E.A.C.E. trusts the host family to respect your need to worship in a different church, ESPECIALLY RECEIVING COMMUNION and therefore, to facilitate your participation in those services, as well - either with a neighbor or by going along with you, if needed.

If you've been inactive lately we recommend you increase attendance again. Your HF will appreciate it. You will soon find that you want and need God a lot.

MAKING FRIENDS is an integral part of your exchange experience and will help to alleviate homesickness. Besides school, there are sports clubs, church youth groups, roller rinks, and of course, your neighbors. A word of caution - while exchange students naturally gravitate to each other (out of a common bond), this can backfire and alienate the American kids as potential friends, since you don't know them, their background or habits.

DATING can be a sensitive issue. While it can facilitate enjoyment of the time spent here, it must be with a variety of persons, preferably in groups. You are here as a goodwill ambassador; steady dating of one person is counterproductive to that end and prohibited.

ORGANIZED SPORTS is a great way to make friends and is most effective in breaking down social, ethnic and racial barriers. Participation should, however, be only with the permission of both natural parents and host parents. Transportation to practices, intrusion into study time, risk of injury, and costs involved should also be discussed.

Sports physicals are not covered by insurance. Nor are all activities. Read your brochure for exclusions.

We strongly recommend, and many schools require, extra accident insurance. This cost is your responsibility.

DRIVING an automobile, except in school driver's training classes or with a host parent in the front, is absolutely prohibited for exchange students, even if you have an International driver's license. Insurance costs, risks, and liabilities override the convenience to participants. Hosts are responsible to provide or find you local transportation within their schedules. You may not take public transportation anywhere on your own unless accompanied by a host approved adult.

EMPLOYMENT is discouraged, but allowed by the Dept. of State, up to 10 hours/wk. in noncompetitive jobs such as baby-sitting, cutting grass, etc. You do not need a SS# for this type of work. Interaction with family and school is our primary objective; steady work outside of shared family chores may interfere with this.

EXCESSIVE E-MAIL, LETTERS & PHONE CALLS, will make your adjustment into the new culture and environment difficult, if not impossible. The bond between host family and ES is diluted and disrupted by too much contact from home. Once every two weeks is recommended. E-mail, chat room, instant messenger, MySpace, Facebook, etc. is restricted to two hours per week, one day a week to focus attention the other six days on where you live & the people you live with. Personal cell phones and laptops are banned until Christmas vacation, except used under parental supervision.

VISITS from natural family & friends are prohibited during the first three months, and are recommended to delay until during long school breaks or at the end of the school year. Visits should preferably be made at the invitation of the host family. You may not travel with your natural parents during mid-year reunions without at least one host family member invited to participate. This also applies to visiting other exchange students, especially those related or from their same hometown. Solo visits from boy/girlfriends are proven to be problematic and, therefore, are absolutely prohibited.

TRAVEL ISSUES

You may travel with your host family for day trips without notifying PEACE but we are responsible to your parents and the U.S. State Department to be able to reach you at all times. Please give your local coordinator or our headquarters a phone number to reach you, if you go off overnight.

- You must never walk or ride anywhere locally away from your host family's home without your host's permission.
- You may not travel out of the local area without your host family except in PEACE-approved, adult-supervised, group activities or with mature American adults tied to the host family or known by them in the host community. (*not relatives or friends of the exchange student's family*).
- Independent touring is always prohibited even taking private taxis, buses or trains to meet adult managed groups.
- You may also not travel alone to visit relatives or countrymen residing in the U.S. except after the school year while en route home, and then only if and when approved by P.E.A.C.E. under State Department criteria.
- You may not travel home or to any other destination to rendezvous with relatives during the Christmas season or any other time of the year. It is a key part of the cultural experience to spend holidays with your host family.
- To visit Canada, Mexico, or other countries, go to their website and find the list of countries needing a visa.
- You must have your passport, DS-2019, I-94, and student ID card to enter. Without all papers you will be *denied U.S. reentry!* A Private school student may have an I-20 instead of DS2019. Above same rules still apply.
- You should be sure to keep your passport and travel documents in a safe place where they won't get lost (like your suitcase).
- Overweight luggage (51 lbs) -or- more than 3 pieces will cost extra money. Plan ahead for this. Make sure that you reserve at least \$200 or more for these penalties.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

HOUSEHOLD RULES must be addressed right away. You did not grow up in your HF house, nor even your HF community, so you must ask what is expected of you. You must act like a family member, not as a guest or boarder.

In this respect, you will be assigned the same curfew, dinner schedules, laundry routines, and chores as your host siblings. If your host parents make exceptions - too strict or too lenient - it will cause resentment between you and your host siblings.

Make sure that you fully understand the ramifications of failure to comply with your host parents rules. If you do not understand a rule, ask your host parents to provide clarification for you.

MAIDS are taken for granted in many Latin American households. While you may need training with "domestic appliances", you will quickly adapt to being expected to make your bed, clean your room and do your own laundry.

DISCIPLINE & CONDUCT

SMOKING is not allowed under any circumstance. Defiant, repeated tobacco use may result in a student's dismissal.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES may not be consumed, except when part of a host family dinner/celebration, such as a wedding. Illegal, alcohol abuse may result in dismissal.

RECREATIONAL DRUG USE and/or distribution is cause for immediate dismissal from the program *and deportation*.

PREMARITAL SEX will not be tolerated during participation in the program. Sexual misconduct (with or without pregnancy occurring), including viewing or distributing pornography or making sexually degrading remarks or overtures to others, is cause for immediate dismissal and return home. **MARRIAGE** is also not allowed during participation, nor may married students enroll in the program.

THEFT, SHOPLIFTING, VANDALISM, FIGHTING or any other lawbreaking is cause for immediate dismissal from the program. We will, of course, assist in any way we can to obtain your freedom and drop formal charges, while enforcing restitution to the victim.

PROBLEMS should always be discussed privately (among the family) but openly. Many forms of behavior are a result of (1) failure to understand a request or order, (2) failure to get the meaning of a phrase or word - even getting it backwards, or (3) culturally different habits. Being exhausted from translating all day at school in the first few months often is mistaken for laziness.

COUNSELING is only a phone call away with either your local representative or our central office counselors. But remember: we can't help what we don't know about - and there are no stupid questions. Extreme consequences as noted above are rarely necessary and never desired, but can only be prevented by early warning and intervention.

LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY

You may initially feel that you know less English than you actually do. This is due to your listening speed being less than conversational. Just as foreign speech seems to fast to your HF when you first arrive, theirs seems too fast to you. But as you relax and acclimate to your new surroundings and pressures lessen you will notice rapid progress.

You are here to perfect your English skills; so, don't be embarrassed when your HF corrects your grammar or pronunciation. They want to help. If they are fluent in your native language don't use it with them in daily conversation. If this is not the case, it's okay for you to teach them a few conversational words and phrases. This will not hurt.

RISKS

UNREALISTIC GOALS OF YOUR HOST FAMILY

- To become fluent in your native language but do try to teach them some words as you learn from them.
- To gain a perfect role model for their children. While not perfect, try, as an ambassador, to be your best.
- To improve their children's social standing. While not your job, including them in your circle, still may help.
- To become your best friend (or siblings best friend), but you should at least take an interest in their lives.
- To secure domestic help with small children. You're not a nanny, BUT it's a natural role as an older sibling.
- To obtain a farmhand, housekeeper, or other laborer, but as chores all these may be some of your routine.

SIBLING RIVALRY is normal in all families with children. You will have to be sensitive to your host sibling's feelings and keep open communication with your host parents. This should be discussed openly with your HF both before and after you arrive. You will have to share your new space/sibling's space, things, time, and host parents' attention.

RELOCATION happens to 20% of all placements. This may be due to sudden job loss, medical emergency, or failure of the host and student to get along. Our concern for everyone may necessitate a move if problems cannot be resolved in a reasonable time. Like a marriage or a business partnership, it takes work to make it work; but 80% success-ratio is pretty good odds for any venture.

YOU DO NOT HAVE AN IRREVOCABLE RIGHT TO YOUR HOST'S HOME. YOU MUST CONTINUOUSLY EARN THE PRIVILEGE TO FINISH THE PROGRAM YEAR IN ANY HOME.

WHAT TO EXPECT

EXPECTATIONS cannot be fairly anticipated from the experiences of others - good, bad or mediocre. Each is unique. Expect a full range of emotions from everyone - anger & joy, disappointment & pride, sorrow & elation. *Focus on making this a great experience for both yourself and your HF but prepare to receive both!*

NOBUDDY'S PERFECT! Industry studies show that at varying times of the year most students experienced some difficulties, but nearly all report having had an enriching and worthwhile experience overall.

We hope you have a great year!