



OAKLAND
CHRISTIAN
— S C H O O L —

International Student Handbook

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International Program Overview

OCS Mission:

Oakland Christian School engages students in a rigorous and relevant education that builds Christ-centered relationships and prepares students to fulfill their unique God-given purpose in our shared world.

OCS Christian Philosophy of Education:

Oakland Christian School views Christian education as the process of instructing and learning in an atmosphere where God and His written Word are the highest authority. We intend to challenge and motivate students to find their highest potential in academic, physical, social, and spiritual growth. Believing that all truth is God's truth, we strive to integrate the student's learning experience with a Bible-centered worldview, enabling the student to realize a life of purpose that is beneficial to people and glorifying to God.

Proverbs 4:13 "Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her for she is your life."

English Language Learning (ELL) Philosophy

Oakland Christian School's approach to ELL learning is to mainstream every international student into regular classes and provide a supportive course entitled American Language and Culture to support student comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing abilities. All first year international students attend a Writing and Integrated Study Hall (W.I.S.H Lab) three days a week after school. W.I.S.H. lab is also available to all returning students. In addition, OCS provides a full-time academic support teacher to all international students. This position supports all of the students in their classes, and is available to provide extra support where needed for each student. This ELL philosophy is very student-ability centered and provides flexibility for students in improving the areas that are weakest for them in language development.

It is our goal to hold our international students to the same high standards as we do American students. At times we may allow for extra revisions or time, but grading and feedback is provided according to the rubric and tools in place for each class. We do this because many international students desire to attend a highly selective university and we want them to know exactly how they are progressing toward this goal as they complete academic work.

Integration with American Culture and Oakland Christian School Culture

When international students enter a new and different culture, they make a choice as to how they will interact with the new culture. Some students tend to assimilate just enough to get by while other students fall on the opposite extreme of ignoring their home culture in accepting the new culture. Our goal at OCS is for students to maintain their home culture and language while simultaneously acquiring a second culture and language. Like putting on and off two different coats, students become bicultural,

learning to move between their two cultures and maintaining the pride and identity they have in both cultures.

Philosophy of Social and Cultural Integration

Various visual images have been used to describe cultural integration in the US: a melting pot in which all the flavors combine together, salad in which each culture remains distinct, and stew in which each flavor remains distinct but influences other flavors. While our goal for international students is authentic friendship at a deep level with American students, we realize that the experience of leaving the home country and family at a young age can be traumatic for many students and this often causes them to relate quickly and deeply with other students who have gone through a similar experience. For this reason, we intentionally build community within our international student program.

We do, however, make an effort as a school to help the international student integrate and cultivate American friendships. This begins with encouraging our American students to reciprocate a cross-cultural friendship. We mainstream all international students in the regular school curriculum and encourage our international students to take part in as many of the OCS activities and events as possible.

Guidelines for International Students

Academic Support

While OCS international students must have achieved a certain level of academic success to have been accepted into the program, they, like all high school students, will have areas of academic weakness. They have access to the same academic support provided for domestic OCS students, but since they experience additional learning challenges unique to being an international student, OCS provides an Academic Support Teacher dedicated to their academic success.

International students who need extra help academically will be required to attend before or after school study sessions. These sessions will address particular issues with writing and study skills and assist students with any class work that is needed. The International Student Academic Advisor will determine when a study session is required. Students may also request additional study sessions if they wish.

International students, with the help of the OCS Counseling office and Education Support Teacher, need to review and choose ACT/ SAT/ TOEFL testing plans. The International Program will cover the cost of the school provided ACT prep class for all international students in their junior year. The International Program will also cover the cost of the ACT test that all juniors take at Oakland Christian School. For additional ACT tests, SAT tests, or TOEFL tests, the host parents will provide transportation to and from the testing location. Because of transportation issues, if you register for an exam

without discussing the testing plan with your host parent first, you may be asked to cancel the test registration and re-register for another exam at your own cost.

Chores

Chores are part of the American home. International students are required to take part in family chores, including doing family dishes, doing the student's own laundry, and cleaning the bathroom, bedroom and common areas in the home.

Please keep in mind that due to the restrictions of student visas, international students are strictly prohibited from working for compensation. Unauthorized employment may result in cancellation of the student visa. As a result, international students may not be employed on either a full or part time basis except sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

Students should not be asked to perform large chores such as pulling weeds or cleaning gutters unless other members of the family are involved in the same chores. Students may not be required or requested to do any chore that involves chemicals, heavy machinery, sharp objects, heights, or bodily fluids. Students should not be expected to act as a regular babysitter or housekeeper.

Computers, Electronic Devices and the Internet

Students are required to have a working cell phone that can be reached by dialing a US domestic phone number. Students should make sure to add minutes to their phones each month as needed.

Host families are required to provide wireless internet at no extra cost to the student, and should have a filter system and spyware software. The language settings of any electronic device must be in English. Students can be asked for the password to his or her electronic device(s) so that internet filtering software can be installed.

International students are strictly prohibited from intentionally viewing a website with pornography, extreme violence, profanity, and/or any other inappropriate content. Depending on severity of conduct, an international student may be subject to discipline, including and up to expulsion, from Oakland Christian School.

Dating

While we understand that students will pursue deep friendships with each other, we do not allow one-on-one dating for international students. When attending school events or weekend activities, students must always be in groups of 3 or more. The host family and OCS staff reserve the right to first meet any international student's friend and approve or disapprove such friend's visit.

Discipline Philosophy

Within the international student program, discipline takes place by both Oakland Christian School (faculty and staff) and by the host family. This discipline is coordinated

by OCS to produce the best educational environment for the student. Oakland Christian School and the host family work together as a team. Under no circumstances is the host family allowed to use corporal punishment on the international student.

We seek to develop relational capital and trust with students early in the relationship. We also seek to observe students doing things that are good so we can give them encouragement and praise. At times, we need to address unhealthy patterns of behavior that are either hurting the student or those around him or her. When an area needing correction is identified, we seek to keep “short accounts,” not waiting very long to directly address the concern with the student, family and host family. We also seek to discipline in love, not anger. Addressing situations early help make this possible.

If students do not correct inappropriate behaviors (whether related to school or the host family), a student may be put on probation with Oakland Christian School. Probation usually involves a semester or year of observation and student-initiated self-reporting. At the end of the probation period, OCS communicates to the student’s family in the home country, student, and host family of our final decision of whether the student can remain enrolled. If the student’s behavior does not meet expected standards, the student will not be allowed to return to Oakland Christian School and their student visa will be cancelled.

If a student repeatedly breaks school rules, including those set forth in the International Student Homestay Handbook, or is found to be doing any illegal activity such as smoking, drugs, shoplifting, etc., the student is sent home immediately at the parent’s expense and the I-20 is terminated for discipline reasons in US immigration databases. Federal law necessitates these steps and Oakland Christian School will not keep a student who has broken the school rules or any applicable laws.

Driving Vehicles/Driver’s License

While enrolled in Oakland Christian School, an international student may not acquire a driver’s license in the United States with the exception of attending driver education school during their senior year. All motor vehicles, including a golf cart and four wheeler are prohibited.

English Only

An “English Only” rule is expected at school and encouraged in your host family’s household, except when the student is on the telephone or Skyping with his or her family or friends in their home country. This will improve proficiency in English, school performance, and also help with homesickness and adjusting to a new environment in the United States.

Family Guidelines

Your host parents are expected to develop family guidelines and provide a copy of these guidelines to the student, his or her parents, and the International Student Coordinator prior to the student’s arrival. The family guidelines should explain how it works in your

host family's home. Examples of items to be covered in the family guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- Dinner time, bedtime, and study-time; (10 or 11 p.m. is fairly standard, an hour later on weekends)
- How laundry is handled (many international students will not be familiar with American washing machines or dryers)
- Curfew hours
- How to clean the kitchen or dining area after your student cooks or eats
- Dress code outside of the student's bedroom
- How to run a dishwasher and other appliances
- What to do in an emergency in the home
- The family's table manners including who sets the table and who clears the dishes

Financial Responsibilities of Host Family

The host family is financially responsible to provide a bed, linens, dresser and/or closet, basic toiletries, and healthy plentiful food choices for your student. Student social events with other students, expensive toiletries, and other optional purchases are the sole responsibility of the student.

The student is responsible for all additional expenses for personal items or activities including, but not limited to: purchasing special foods and snacks not a part of your family's normal diet, restaurant meals when it is not the family meal, personal entertainment such as movies and sports events when it is not a family event, travel, personal items like more expensive brands of toiletries, clothing, and long-distance telephone calls.

Lunches are provided by the host family and can be provided through the school lunch program or by the student packing a lunch at home. Most host families provide 2-3 lunches a week through the school lunch program and ask the student to pack lunch the other days.

Insurance

Students will be offered the option of purchasing medical insurance during the period of his or her enrollment in Oakland Christian School. If insurance is purchased, an insurance identification card will be issued. The student should carry the card with him or her at all times. Host families are not responsible for their student's medical expenses. The student's parents are responsible for all medical costs the student incurs. All medical bills should be in the student's name with the school address: 3075 Shimmons Rd., Auburn Hills, MI 48326.

Meals

Host families are expected to cook a dinner meal for students at least 3 times a week. Host families will also have ample food available for meal preparation and snacks. The student can make reasonable requests of the host family for specific food items,

including letting the host family know about any dietary restriction. Students are responsible for lunch purchases at school beyond what the lunch card covers. When a student meets friends for lunch or dinner at a restaurant, he or she is responsible for these expenses.

Problem Resolution / Host Family Assignment

The student and the host family may face challenges from time to time during the school year. Issues that arise should be discussed between the student and the host family to see if they can be resolved privately. If an issue cannot be resolved, OCS staff can step in and help. Generally, unless extenuating circumstances exist, international students are not allowed to change their host families, and host families are expected to remain committed to hosting an originally assigned student for the whole academic year. The International Student Coordinator determines when reassignment of a student is necessary or warranted.

Church Services and Weekend Family Activities

International students are expected to attend religious services with their host families. They are also encouraged to participate in other family activities on weekends or during holidays when they are in the home.

Short Trips

International students often get invitations to church retreats or other trips with an American friend's family. For an overnight trip, written permission must be obtained via email from the student's parents. Students and host families must also communicate these plans and forward the permission email to the International Student Coordinator. 48 hour's notice is needed for the proposed trip or retreat.

Social Media Policy

To protect the privacy of each host family, international students must follow Oakland Christian School's social media policy. International students are not allowed to post pictures or videos of any member of the host family without the host family's prior approval. Nor are they allowed to discuss any matters related to any member of the host family unless they obtain prior approval of the host family. Furthermore, international students must promptly delete any comments, pictures, or videos related to the host family if requested by the host family. Similarly, host families are expected to provide the same level of privacy to their student with regard to social media.

Supervision and Whereabouts

Overall supervision of the student is one of the most important obligations of a host family. The host family must know where the international student is at all times. Students should text or call when their intended plans change. The student is required to have a working cell phone with minutes available for both talk and text, and must respond to a call or text from a host parent immediately if outside of school hours.

International students may not stay alone overnight in the host family's home. When possible, the student should go with the family on trips (within the United States). If this is not possible, arrangements need to be made to stay with another family. This must be approved by the International Student Coordinator prior to the scheduled trip

Transportation

Host families provide students with transportation to and from school. They also arrange or provide transportation to and from church and extracurricular activities such as sports, retreats, and other school functions. Students should discuss ride needs with the host family 24 hours in advance whenever possible. The transportation needs to be coordinated in the context of the overall family needs. Under no circumstances should students hitchhike, solicit a ride from a stranger or use Uber or similar services. Students are not allowed to accept a ride not approved by the host family in advance.

Visits by Your Student's Family and Friends

International families have the opportunity to visit their student while they study at OCS. We encourage this. International students' families are requested to let us know at least two weeks in advance of their visit.

Oakland Christian School will help the student's family find hotel accommodations and transportation. A student's family is not permitted to stay in the host family home. Usually students stay with their family at a nearby hotel during their visits. We will coordinate plans for this visit, including a dinner meeting with the host family as well as a time for the family to meet the student's teachers at OCS.

Safety and Health

Accident or Illness

- Ask for help from your host family initially and seek medical attention if needed.
- Students should bring the insurance card with him or her and the signed Medical Release Form and present them to the hospital or physician to obtain treatment.
- Contact the International Student Coordinator and/or School Nurse as soon as possible.
- Proceed with the doctor's advice for emergency treatment.
- Complete insurance procedures by contacting the International Student Coordinator.

Abuse/Assault

If you witness or hear about the abuse or assault of any OCS international student, please contact the International Student Coordinator immediately.

Dangerous Recreational Activities

Student may not participate in any dangerous recreational activities from which a risk of serious physical injury can be reasonably discerned. Examples of such dangerous

activities include, but are not limited to: ski jumping, hang gliding, bungee jumping, use of firearms at a shooting range, and skydiving.

Students may participate in more common types of recreational activity with prior approval of the International Student Coordinator and the student's parents. Such recreational activity includes: hiking, cross country or downhill skiing, snowboarding, zip lining, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking.

Compliance with Laws Including Smoking, Alcohol and Drug Use

All international students must comply with all laws of the United States including state laws and municipal ordinances. Under no circumstances may students use, purchase, or possess any tobacco products, drugs, or alcohol. All international students are required to comply with all laws of the United States as a condition of their student visa. If you learn that your student has violated any applicable law, contact the International Student Coordinator immediately.

Weapons

Students may not use, possess, purchase, or own any type of weapons such as a knife or a firearm under any circumstances. The only exception is the use of a regular cooking knife to prepare meals.

Change in Medical Status

When a student is diagnosed with a previously undisclosed or unknown medical condition, the International Student Coordinator must be notified immediately so OCS can determine what steps must be taken.

Guidelines for Appropriate Boundaries

Healthy Emotional and Physical Boundaries

Setting appropriate student-to-student boundaries and adult-to-student boundaries is one of the most important parts of the international student program. Below are boundaries and guideposts that must be followed to the extent applicable to you and your student:

- The student can be home for a few hours by him or herself but should not be home alone or with just other students overnight.
- At no time should a male student enter a female student's room or vice versa. Host parents should use discretion when entering a room of a student of the opposite gender. It is always good protocol for either parent to knock first and ask permission before entering a student's room.
- Oakland Christian School employee policy states that teachers and staff should never be alone with a student. We understand and allow for the uniqueness of the host family responsibilities and therefore allow host parents to be alone with students in the home for short periods of time or while driving the student to

school, etc. but require another adult (usually the spouse) to know of this situation in these instances. For example, if a dad drives his student to school in the morning and it is just the two of them in the car, the mother should know when they leave and when they are dropped off. We do want to clearly avoid one-on-one adult-student time together when at all possible and definitely at times when a student might be emotionally vulnerable or upset. If an adult finds him or herself unintentionally alone with a student, the adult should share that this occurred with a spouse or staff member as soon as possible for accountability.

Guidelines for Modesty/Behavior

As with displays of affection, there are differences among cultures regarding what constitutes modesty and seductive behavior. The following guidelines apply to American culture for both students and adults.

Modesty

- No contact between adults and student while either is wearing only undergarments.
- Bathrobes or housecoats should be worn over sleepwear.
- No suggestive or revealing clothing.
- Student must strictly adhere to school dress code.
- No immodest bathing suits.

Behavior

- Absolutely no flirting between adults and student
- No language or jokes with sexual connotations
- Absolutely no dating, flirting, romantic, or sexual behavior with a student

Guidelines for Showing Affection

Oakland Christian School encourages healthy, appropriate expressions of affection between our host families and international students. However, it is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate forms of affection. Due to cultural differences, this distinction is not always clear. Although each culture differs somewhat in what is acceptable versus unacceptable when displaying affection, the following forms of affection are considered to be acceptable in American culture:

- Brief hugs upon greeting or parting
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives"
- Holding hands during prayer

The following forms of affection are examples of inappropriate behavior between host parents or other adults and students:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Adult holding hands with student

- Kisses on the mouth or lips
- Student sitting on the lap of an adult
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, or other private rooms
- Occupying a bed with the student for any purpose
- Touching knees or legs
- Wrestling, tickling or piggyback rides
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) by adult to student that relate to physique or body development
- Giving gifts or money to the student
- Private meals in an intimate environment

Travel and School Breaks

Christmas, Spring Break and Summer Breaks

We strongly encourage all international students to travel home for Christmas break because of the high value we put on the relationship with the student and his or her home family. Even a 10-day to 2-week break is very helpful to the student's cultural and psychological adjustment and is recommended very highly by Oakland Christian School.

Having stated this strong preference for travel home, OCS does allow international students to stay in the United States for Christmas break with a relative or close family friend. In this case, a permission form is required from the parent stating the international family takes full responsibility for the logistics and care of their student while visiting the relative or friend in the U.S. Students must understand that while they are in the U.S. with family or friends, they are under the same guidelines for the international student program and U.S. laws for F1 visa students. Students who violate these guidelines and laws can be expelled from school for these actions and decisions.

If a student chooses not to go home for Christmas break, and the host family is in agreement, the student may stay with his/her host family for an additional fee of \$750. The cost of travel home or to a relative for Christmas break is the financial responsibility of the international student's family. Students need permission from the International Student Coordinator to travel on different days from the travel dates listed in the enrollment contract.

Students are required to go home every summer to reconnect with their families. This travel is the financial responsibility of the international student's family. The host family is expected to take the student to and from the airport for travel home. Students need permission from the International Student Coordinator to travel outside of the travel dates listed in the enrollment contract.

Emergencies

Emergency Procedures

Students should know what to do in an emergency in the host family's home. This includes having phone numbers of family members and trusted neighbors and understanding how to call 911.

Contact Information and Where to Go for Help

Chain of Communication

If you have a problem or simply want to ask a question, your first point of contact is the International Student Coordinator. In the event that you are unable to resolve the problem with her, your next point of contact would be Roy Townsend, Secondary Principal.

24/7 Support

Whenever possible, contact the International Student Coordinator during school hours. Emergency support is available to our international students and host families 24/7. If you have an emergency and the International Student Coordinator is unavailable, call the Director of Admissions, Josh Thayer. You will be counseled as to how to receive personal support for your emergency.

Contact Information

International Student Program

Mrs. Wood
International Student Coordinator
cell: 574-276-0368

Mrs. Nickel
Education Support Teacher-
International
248-373-2700

Secondary Office

Mr. Townsend
Secondary Principal
248-373-2700

Mrs. Frazee
Student Counselor
248-373-2700

Mrs. Lewis
School Nurse
248-373-2700