



OAKLAND
CHRISTIAN
— S C H O O L —

International Homestay Program
Family Handbook

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Homestay Program Overview

Goals of the Homestay Family

The primary goal of the Oakland Christian School Homestay (Host) Family program is to provide a home environment for international students that will enrich and support the mission of the school through a Christ-centered, loving, and supportive family experience.

International students choose to attend Oakland Christian School primarily for the purpose of improving their English language skills with the goal of gaining admittance into a United States college or university. The best way for students to attain this objective is through immersion in an English-speaking home environment as well as through the daily study of academic disciplines in English. Living with an American homestay family also enables our international students to gain first-hand cultural understanding. This responsibility does demand time and attention and should not be taken lightly. Please ensure that your family and personal schedules allow the time it will take to invest in the life of the student in order to meet these goals.

Your international student may not be a Christian, but has chosen to study at OCS with the full awareness that he or she will be living with a Christian Homestay family and studying in a Christian school. Your student understands that he or she will have a Bible class each year, attend weekly chapel, and attend church with your family. We don't require that the students believe what we believe, but we do ask them to respect our beliefs. We also commit that we will respect them. It is our prayer that through the experiences the student will share with your family, the Holy Spirit will guide him or her to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Your student may agree with what you say so as not to offend you, but that may not reflect an actual understanding of what you are saying and expecting of him or her. The promotion of a long-term relationship built on trust where questions can be freely asked and answered without a sense of condemnation is very important in order to reach the heart of an international student.

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.

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.

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.

The Intersection of the Oakland Christian Family and the Homestay Family

Host families adopt the concept of being “step-in” parents. We believe that the international student and his or her academic, spiritual, physical, and social growth is our responsibility while the student is in our care, but we simultaneously invite the family in the home country to remain actively involved alongside us in the counsel and nurture of the student. The host family is encouraged to send periodic photos and emails to the international families.

Oakland Christian School serves as a third party to the relationship between an international student and a host family, monitoring student progress, facilitating communication, and determining improvement in any area as needed. OCS requests feedback from students regarding their host families and feedback from the host families regarding their students

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.

Expectations of Host Families

Application Process for Host Families

Before a host family begins to host an Oakland Christian School international student, they complete an application with references, an interview, a home visit, and a background fingerprinting exam.

Financial Responsibilities of Host Families

Host families provide housing, transportation to and from school and activities, and food consisting of 3 meals a day. Oakland Christian School will provide lunch for any international student if they choose. This is offered as a help to the students and host families, but if the student doesn't prefer the school lunch, the host family is still responsible to provide the student with food for lunch. Students will purchase some of their own snacks, but a host family should provide food to the international students as they would their own children. This would include some snacks and paying for a meal at a restaurant if the family chooses to eat out.

Your 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, personal travel, personal items like more expensive brands of toiletries, clothing, and long-distance telephone calls.

The host family must inform the International Student Coordinator of any material changes in the status of their host family or the international student, including changes in address, new adult members of the household, finances, criminal arrest or conviction, driving while under the influence arrest or conviction, and domestic violence. Any financial information disclosed will be used solely for the purpose of determining that the basic needs of the international student can be met including sufficient home utilities, food, and transportation.

Helping Your International Student Feel Welcome

Hospitality Hints

You may wonder how you can help your student feel welcome and settle in. Here are some helpful tips:

- a. Learn something about your student's country, culture, and customs before his or her arrival. You may read books or search the internet to get more information. As you learn about your student's cultural background, keep an open mind and avoid stereotyping or prejudging. Seek to know your student and learn about his or her

cultural background from the student. Learn more about your own American cultural values. Realize American values of time, work, honesty and equality are different than other cultures' values. This will help you and your student understand and anticipate differences and manage conflict more easily.

- b. When your student arrives, ask him or her what kind of foods he or she is accustomed to eating so you have a better idea of his or her likes and dislikes. Also, ask your student if there are any dietary restrictions.
- c. Welcome your student with warmth and friendship. Learn to pronounce your student's name.
- d. Speak distinctly but not loudly or overly slow. International students can often understand English better than they can speak English. It is more helpful to pause between sentences than to speak each word slowly. Try to avoid use of slang expressions until your student's informal English vocabulary increases as many international students may have only learned standard English. International students may arrive without the skills to use polite English grammar when stating a request. Try not to interpret a direct request as a sign of rudeness and use this opportunity to coach in this area.
- e. Show genuine interest in your student. Get him to talk about himself. Ask her about family, education, religious background, home life, culture, customs, food likes and dislikes, aspirations, activities, and plans. Learn greetings in your student's language. Give her time to answer and encourage her to ask questions about you, your family, or the United States as well. Some international students may be much more willing to talk about politics or religion than Americans are. In any event, do not argue with your student. Don't pry if he seems hesitant. Use natural avenues into these discussions like Bible class or research paper projects to launch discussions.
- f. You may not always understand or agree with your student, but you should avoid making value judgments such as "right and wrong" or "better and worse" about aspects of his or her culture. Recognize these differences are simply differences.
- g. As you welcome your student, make sure to go over the family guidelines with your student to avoid misunderstandings and potential conflicts later on. Discuss behaviors that violate host family guidelines early on so good behavior patterns are established and these issues can be addressed without anger, frustration or resentment. Also make sure that your student understands that he or she is free to have food and drinks in the refrigerator or the pantry and to prepare a meal in the kitchen.
- h. Your student may not be accustomed to the way typical Americans eat at the dinner table. In some cultures, it is not the custom to start eating as soon as you are served; rather, people wait until everyone has been served. Similarly, your student may come from a culture where it is considered impolite to accept a second serving until it has been offered several times. With these possible cultural differences in mind, take time to explain American custom at the dinner table.

Intercultural Adjustment Process

Culture shock is a normal part of student adjustment to a new culture. The middle stages of culture shock, which can include flight (avoidance) and fight (confrontation and anger), can

sometimes cause students to feel particularly anxious or depressed. As a host family, you should keep in mind that adjusting to life in a different country takes time. Typically, host families and international students go through the following stages in their intercultural adjustment:

Stage 1 – Honeymoon

Your student has finally made it to the United States after months of preparation for the new chapter of his or her life. Your student will be excited that he or she is finally in the United States and also enthusiastic about meeting new people and experiencing new things and places. You, too, will be excited about the new addition to your family and feel great about your decision to host an international student. Unfortunately, this honeymoon period will not last forever in most cases.

Stage 2 – Homesickness/ Fight and Flight

Your student will now start to really recognize cultural differences between the home country and the United States. As you can imagine, cultural differences can be shocking and hard to accept. A student's reaction to cultural shock may present itself in different forms as a student's reaction to cultural shock will vary from student to student. Some students may feel annoyed, frustrated, or angry while other students may feel homesick or lonely. You might also notice your student has been spending a lot of time alone in his or her bedroom. Or, you might hear your student say in anger "that's not how it works in my country!" At this stage, you might wonder what happened to your student.

Stage 3 – Cultural Adaptation

Your student will be on the road to recovery. Your student will start to learn to overcome cultural shock. You may notice a positive change in your student's attitude. This is a sign that your student has finally started to accept reality and outgrow the previous stage where he or she acted in denial. Once your student's mindset has arrived at this stage, his or her feelings will be stabilized, and your student will find a way to enjoy him or herself in the United States.

Supporting Your Student

As you and your student navigate through the ups and downs of the intercultural adjustment process, keep in mind that understanding the conflicting emotions that your student may experience is crucial. You should not take your student's occasional negative attitude personally. Try to remain open to your student's feelings and complaints. Don't argue with your student. Don't deny your student's negative feelings that he or she may express to you. Instead, focus on helping your student understand that, as part of the intercultural adjustment process, it is common and normal to develop negative feelings. If you have any questions or concerns about your student's behavior, please contact the International Student Coordinator. Oakland Christian School is here to support you in this. We understand that the middle stages of cultural shock can sometimes cause students to feel particularly anxious or depressed.

If a student is feeling particularly low, crying for several nights in a row, has become aggressive or has talked about hurting himself or herself or others, host families must share this

information with the International Student Coordinator immediately. Families and OCS staff should work together as a support team to help a student who shows the signs of extreme stress. Additionally, you can help your student better adjust to a new environment by researching school and community activities that may bring about a positive impact on your student's adjustment process. Your student may not know all available opportunities for getting involved in school and the local community. Making new friends and finding something to keep them occupied will help quicken recovery from homesickness or perhaps even deter homesickness

Guidelines for Hosting an International Student in Your Home

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.

Homestay parents should engage with their international student's academic progress in much the same manner they would for their own students: ask about classes and projects and tests; help the student review or study for a test; answer questions and give suggestions when guidance is requested. If the student seems to be struggling or unduly stressed in a particular class or with a particular project, please contact the Academic Support Teacher, who will follow up with the student and teachers as necessary, as well as provide Homestay parents with strategies to support the student.

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.

You and your student, 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. You are requested to provide your student with transportation to and from the testing location. If your student registers for an exam without discussing the testing plan with you first, and neither you nor your spouse can give your student a ride to and from the testing location, you can ask your student to cancel the test registration and re-register for another exam at his or her own cost.

Bedroom

You are required to provide a separate bed for each student, storage space for personal items, and access to a bathroom. Your student's bed cannot be placed in an open area such as a family room or furnished basement. All bedrooms must have full access outside. If a bedroom is the basement, a full or egress window is required. Additionally, you must provide adequate storage for clothing, a quiet study area consisting of a desk or table, chair, and adequate lighting. Many host families use the dining room table for this study area.

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 their 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.

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

Communications

To give your student's parents peace of mind, please follow the guidelines below and keep your student's parents informed of their child's status:

- a. Host families are expected to send a short email or photo of their student to the international family periodically during the school year.
- b. International students are expected to Skype/Facetime or call their parents in the home country at least weekly.
- c. Host families are expected to reply to an email from Oakland Christian personnel or their student's parents within 24 hours. If a host family determines it would be helpful to coordinate a response to the student's parents first with the International Student Coordinator instead of responding to the email right away, host families should first acknowledge receipt of the email and let the student's parents know an approximate anticipated time of their reply.
- d. Host families are expected to have regular family meetings to address family and student needs. The host parent should also intentionally connect one-on-one with their international student to personally encourage, challenge, and pray for their student according to what is going on in their life that week.

Computers, Electronic Devices and the Internet

Host families are required to provide wireless internet at no extra cost to the student, and must have a filter system and spyware software. Please ensure that your student's computer and electronic device(s) interface with your computer network.

Your student will need to use the internet in your home for school work and for communication with their family back home. Use of the internet for entertainment purposes can be limited by the host family. Some students will need more limits and guidelines than others. Electronic devices in the student's bedroom should be discouraged. You may grant an exception when privacy is necessary in your judgment.

Students are also required to have a working cell phone that can be reached by dialing a US domestic phone number. Host families should make sure that the student adds minutes to his phone each month as needed. If the student does not comply with this rule, host families can contact the International Student Coordinator for additional support in this requirement.

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. Please contact the International Student Coordinator if you have any concerns regarding your student's use of the Internet.

Dating

While we understand that students will pursue deep friendships with each other, we do not allow one-on-one or single dating for international students. When attending school events or weekend activities, students should be in groups of 3 or more. The exception to this rule would be for Homecoming and Prom. A date to these events is acceptable, but the host family should still ensure that the students are only traveling to and from the activity and not spending large amounts of time unsupervised. You 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.

All international students are required to read the International Student Homestay Handbook which details obligations and rules that each international student must follow while enrolled in Oakland Christian School. International students may be disciplined in accordance with the OCS Student Handbook and/or the International Student Homestay Handbook. We recommend that host parents also read the International Student Homestay Handbook.

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. 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 may 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, the student will be 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 repeatedly broken the school rules or any applicable U.S. laws. Please advise the International Student Coordinator if you have any issues regarding unacceptable or unruly behavior that you are not able to handle with your student.

Driving Vehicles/Driver's License

While enrolled in Oakland Christian School, your student may not acquire a driver's license in the United States with the exception of attending driver education school when your student is a senior. Your student may not operate any type of motor vehicle including a golf cart and four wheeler. Under no circumstances should you allow your student to operate a motor vehicle even in your driveway or backyard.

English Only

You are encouraged to enforce an "English Only" rule in your household and whenever you are with your student, except when your student is on the telephone or Skyping with his or her family or friends in their home country. Improving your student's proficiency in English will not only help your student perform better in school, but also help them better cope with homesickness and adjusting to a new environment in the United States.

Family Guidelines

You are expected to develop your own family guidelines and communicate these to your student. Your family guidelines should explain how it works in your home. You should not take anything for granted. 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 your 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

Insurance

Your student will have medical insurance either purchased through OCS or through the agency they came under. Your student will receive an insurance identification card and should carry his or her insurance identification card with him or her at all times. Host families will also receive copies of the insurance card and it would be helpful to keep that accessible as well. Host families are not responsible for their student's medical expenses. The student's parents are responsible for all medical costs the student incurs. Please make sure that all bills are in your student's name and that you use the school address for all medical visits: 3075 Shimmons Rd., Auburn Hills, MI 48326.

Problem Resolution / Host Family Assignment

You and your student may face challenges from time to time during your student's stay at your home. You and your student should discuss issues that arise between you to see if they can be resolved privately. If an issue cannot be resolved between you and your student, 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

In addition to religious services your student is required to attend with you, you are expected to include your student in all other family activities on weekends or during holidays. Remember: treat your student as your own child.

Short Trips

International students often get invitations to church retreats or other trips with an American friend's family. If your student is leaving the area for an overnight trip, you must obtain written permission via email from your student's parents. Students and host families must also communicate these plans and forward the permission email to the International Student Coordinator. The exception this is students who are with ASSE. They are not permitted to

travel with someone other than their host family, the international student coordinator, or with an approved school function.

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, you are expected to provide the same level of privacy to your student with regard to social media. Please ask your student for permission before mentioning or posting pictures of them.

Supervision and Whereabouts

Your overall supervision of the student is one of your most important obligations in hosting a student. The host family must know where the international student is at all times. You should instruct your student to text or call you if 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.

You cannot leave your student alone overnight. If you schedule a trip, you must either take your student with you or arrange a temporary stay for your student with another host family approved by Oakland Christian School prior to your scheduled trip. You must notify the International Student Coordinator when these plans are made. In case of emergency, you must contact the International Student Coordinator for assistance in finding an alternate host family.

Transportation

Your student will rely on you for transportation. You must provide your student with transportation to and from school. You are also required to arrange or provide transportation for your student to and from church and extracurricular activities such as sports, retreats, and other school functions. Students should discuss ride needs with you 24 hours in advance whenever possible and your flexibility in providing rides will be in the context of your overall family needs. Under no circumstances should you allow your student to hitchhike, solicit a ride from a stranger or use Uber or similar services. Your student is not allowed to accept a ride not approved by you in advance. The host family is also responsible for transportation to and from the airport for the student.

Visitors in Your Home

Your student may have a guest at your home subject to your prior approval of the visit. Please inform the International Student Coordinator of adult visitors who stay in your home overnight. Visitors who will be there for an extended stay will need to undergo a background check.

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. If you are the first to learn of a family visit, notify the International Student Coordinator as soon as possible. Your student's family is not permitted to stay in your home. Usually students stay with their family at a nearby hotel during their visits.

Safety and Health

Safety of Students

You are expected to share in Oakland Christian School's responsibility for each student's safety. Keep an eye on your student as he or she develops friendships and try to meet his or her friends.

Please know where your student is going or where he or she is at all times, and ensure that the driver has a valid drivers' license and is a safe, responsible driver. Don't be afraid to step in, as you would with your own child, if you foresee any trouble.

Accident or Illness

- Provide initial care for your student and seek medical attention if needed.
- You must ensure that your student brings 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.
- Make sure that you and/or the student (depending on language ability) inform the student's parents of any medical issues.
- Proceed with the doctor's advice for emergency treatment.

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

You may not allow your student to 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.

If you knowingly allow your student to engage in a dangerous recreational activity, you will be fully responsible for any harm arising out of your student's involvement in such an activity.

You may take your student for more common types of recreational activity. 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.

Although many laws are fairly apparent, some laws may not be apparent to your student depending on your student's background. For example, in some European countries, the legal drinking age can be as young as 16. We ask you not take anything for granted and help your student to understand and comply with all laws of the United States.

Weapons

You may not allow your student to use, possess, purchase, or own any type of weapons such as a knife or a firearm under any circumstances. The only exception is when your student uses a regular cooking knife to prepare meals with your prior approval.

Change in Medical Status

If you learn that your student is diagnosed with a previously undisclosed or unknown condition, please notify the International Student Coordinator 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 an important part 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.

Guidelines for Appropriate Interactions with Student

As a host parent to an international student, your actions should at all times be above reproach and guided by the best interests of the student. Although it is not an exhaustive list, the following is a reminder that all interactions between you and the student should always be safe, healthy, positive and respectful. By agreeing to serve as a host parent and family:

- You accept the responsibility for the healthy and safe development of the student.
- You understand and fully accept the trust placed in you by the student and his or her family.
- You accept your responsibility as a host parent to establish and maintain healthy boundaries with the student and to refrain from taking advantage of or otherwise exploiting the imbalance of power for any reason.
- You pledge to nurture the well-being and safety of the student, and to do all you can to promote their physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth during this host family stay.
- You acknowledge that the inherent imbalance of power in a relationship between a student and adult requires the adult charged with the student's care to set limits and maintain healthy, professional boundaries at all times.
- In serving as a host parent to an international student, you agree never to engage in any verbal or physical contact with the student that is sexual in nature, and understand that sexual or amorous behavior between you and the student, even if allegedly in jest and even if the student initiates, encourages or appears to encourage such advances or behavior, is wholly inappropriate and a severe breach of your responsibilities as a host parent.

The following are examples of sexual conduct and other inappropriate behavior regarding interactions with the student:

- engaging in any sexual or dating relationship with the student
- engaging in sexual, romantic or overly familiar communications with the student directly in person or indirectly through the use of email, telephone, social networking or other media
- engaging in, participating in or condoning in any way the use of alcohol or illegal drugs by the student
- sharing any overly personal or financial information concerning yourself with the student; gossiping or making derogatory comments about OCS, its administration, faculty and employees to the student
- sharing or disclosing any information concerning the student to any person not specifically authorized to receive such information, including, but not limited to, information concerning educational assessments, test scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health, and family background or finances
- performing back rubs on the student
- kissing the student

- touching the student frequently
- commenting on the student's body or appearance in a sexual manner or sexually suggestive manner
- exchanging romantic gifts or communications with the student
- showing obscene or suggestive photos to the student
- videotaping or photographing the student in revealing or suggestive poses
- making sexual jokes, gestures, and innuendos or engaging in inappropriate banter of a sexual nature with the student
- sharing your own sexual exploits or marital difficulties
- intentionally invading a student's privacy
- secretive behavior with the student

To the extent that you have any questions or concerns about anything regarding your international student or their behaviors, you should speak with the International Student Coordinator.

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.

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

Your student will receive these guidelines prior to his or her arrival at your home, so he or she should act appropriately. However, if you have concerns about how your student demonstrates affection, or with his or her modesty or behavior which may be perceived as seductive, speak with him or her directly. If you are unable to resolve the problem, contact the International Student Coordinator. In the unfortunate event that your student indicates that some other individual is inappropriate with him or her, you must contact the International Student Coordinator immediately.

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

Travel with Your Student

If you plan to travel with your student, you must notify Oakland Christian School of your scheduled trip in advance. You may not travel with your student internationally without prior approval of the International Student Coordinator. It is easy to leave the United States, but it can be significantly difficult for international students to re-enter the United States due to their immigration status.

Christmas, Spring Break and Summer Breaks

We strongly encourage all year 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, 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

Please make sure that your student knows what to do in an emergency in your home. This includes having phone numbers of your family members and trusted neighbors and understanding how to call 911.

As a host family, you should contact the International Student Coordinator any time there is an emergency or crisis situation including your student. This includes situations such as a medical emergency, fire in the home, lost student, or health issues of the student such as an eating disorder or other illness.

Lost Student

- Contact the police if necessary.
- Contact the International Student Coordinator.

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

Kelly Wood
International Student Coordinator
cell: 574-276-0368

Ann Marie Nickel
Education Support Teacher- International
248-373-2700

Secondary Office

Roy Townsend
Secondary Principal
248-373-2700

Jeneane Frazee
Student Counselor
248-373-2700

Heather Lewis
School Nurse
248-373-2700

Thank you for taking the time to read and understand this Host Family Handbook.

We hope it helps you prepare for welcoming your student and having an enjoyable experience for you, your family and your student.

What a privilege it is to serve our God in this way!