



# **QUEST REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING MANUAL**

## **F-1 School Programs**

### **Welcome to Quest International**

Your contribution as Quest Representative promises to be a memorable and rewarding experience. On behalf of the Quest International staff *we welcome you!*

This manual is designed to give you pertinent information regarding the placement of exchange students, school acceptance, host families, and your overall responsibilities as a Quest Representative. It focuses on Quest International policies, rules, regulations and guidelines.

**Please visit our Website for information about all of the programs we offer and more about our organization [www.questexchange.org](http://www.questexchange.org)**

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## Overview of Quest International

Quest International was founded in 1999 as a nonprofit organization committed to international, educational student exchange. Our goal is to promote cultural awareness and international understanding by offering quality, educational and cultural programs for students, host families and schools. Our staff is dedicated to creating a positive exchange experience for all program participants.

The Quest International National Office is located in San Francisco, California. We offer a wide variety of exchange opportunities for Americans and international students. Our programs are open to both youth and adults interested in learning a language or becoming integrated with a new culture. Our partnerships are with American schools and foreign organizations overseas. We value the relationships we have with our partners, and we work together to provide quality programs to our participants.

### CSIET

Quest International works within the guidelines of **CSIET** (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel). CSIET is a non-governmental organization which carefully screens and regulates student exchange organizations in the United States. Strict standards must be met in order for organizations to be approved by CSIET. Please visit their website for complete information: [www.csiet.org](http://www.csiet.org)

### National Office

The Quest National Office is located in San Francisco, California and is open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, Pacific Standard Time. Please feel free to contact us: (415) 665-3900, [info@questexchange.org](mailto:info@questexchange.org)

### Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency, you or the student's host family must report to the National Office immediately. Please call the Quest line at (415) 665-3900 and give the following information:

- Student's name and country
- Nature of illness or emergency
- Address and telephone number where the student can be reached
- Telephone number of attending physician

Quest International will be in contact with the natural family and the foreign partner office regarding emergencies.

### National Incident

Quest International will act promptly and professionally in getting immediate information to the foreign organization/partner and natural parents regarding the safety of all exchange students in the case of a National Crisis. An attempt to make contact will be made, utilizing all methods of available communication. The safety of exchange students is Quest International's number one priority. Emergency calls will be returned; please do not call after hours unless it is a real emergency. Remember that our office is located in the Pacific Time zone.

## Representative Responsibilities

As a Quest International representative you are the first line of contact for the students. It is your job to encourage and support your students, families and schools in all of their endeavors. Your actions are crucial to ensuring a successful exchange experience for all program participants. All Representatives will undergo a Criminal Background check prior to starting any work for Quest International.

CSIET regulations must be adhered to; it is your responsibility to complete the host family recruiting and screening process according to the information provided to you in this training manual. Failure to do so may result in non-payment and or termination.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Promote Quest International's student exchange program in the local community.
- Recruit potential host families for student placement. Ensure that the host family has financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment for the student.
- Conduct an in home host family visit prior to student's arrival, obtain photos of the home and outside area.
- Obtain paperwork necessary to complete the placement: 1. Criminal Background check Authorization Form (one for each host family member 18 years or older), 2. Host Family Reference Review (call references to verify) 3. Host Family Agreement Form, 4. Host Family Interview Form. Paperwork must be sent to the Quest National office within 15 days of completion or prior to student's arrival.
- Conduct a Host Family Orientation prior to your student's arrival. Provide host families with information regarding the exchange program and the parameters of their participation, duties, responsibilities and financial obligations. Review in detail the Quest Host Family Handbook and the House Rules.
- Meet Quest students on arrival at local airports when possible and secure meeting arrangements with host family.
- Conduct a Student Orientation no later than two weeks after student's arrival. Review the orientation guidelines and obtain a signed Student Orientation Agreement.
- Monitor progress and experiences of student /host family placement. Initiate telephone or in person contact with your students and host families at least once a month. Monthly Reports must be conducted for each student and must be submitted no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month.
- Be available to Quest students and host families to assist with any problems or questions that may occur. Keep clear documentation of any problems that may arise through "Incident Reports" sent via email to the Quest International office. Meet with student and host family to solve problems and/or misunderstandings.
- Timely relocation of students in the event of an emergency situation. Removing a student from the current host family may require the student's temporary stay in the Quest Representative's home until a replacement host family is secured.
- Report all student violations of U.S. laws or Quest program rules within 24 hours. Reporting must be done in writing; in the case of a serious offense the report must be made immediately by phone to the Quest National Office.
- Assist students with departure preparation and bid farewell at local airport.
- Comply with all CSJET, U.S., local, state, and Federal laws/requirements to do business as an independent contractor.
- Immediately report the following to your Regional Coordinator or Quest International National Office:
  - Knowledge of student's intent to move from host family.
  - Your student is moved from the current host family.
  - Any travel in which a student intends to participate. It is important to ensure appropriate release forms are signed (by natural family, student, and HF) and returned to Quest *prior* to student's departure or participation. Students are not allowed to leave the U.S. and return without prior consent and appropriate documentation. If a student is interested in traveling with a member of the natural family, the natural parents must sign a travel authorization form temporarily releasing Quest of any responsibility during the duration of the trip.
  - Knowledge of student's natural family/friend intention to visit the student in the U.S.
  - Student medical emergency; please call the Quest National Office immediately so that we may contact natural parents.

## Computer and Internet Requirements

You need to be familiar with working on a computer, as you will be submitting your reports using our “online” access forms. We recommend that you have a high-speed internet connection. You will be using our website to login to view your paperwork status and retrieve documents needed to perform your job. You should be familiar with Word, and have Adobe downloaded (it is free) on your computer. Adobe will open PDF documents. You should also have access to a printer and scanner - library computer labs are free. Your email address should be secure and you should be willing to check it once a day.

## Personal Websites and Posting Information using the Quest International Name

Quest Reps may only use Quest approved promotional materials. Do not post ads or promotional material without approval. You may not use the Quest name or any language found on the Quest website for any public postings unless it has been sent to the Quest National Office for approval. If you have a personal website, you must give this URL to the Quest National Office.

## Quest Representative Website Support

You are issued a user name and password to access the Quest Representative Login area of the Quest website. Here you can download all documents needed to recruit, screen and supervise your host families and students. Below are some further definitions of what you will find under your login.

## Host Family Screening Paperwork

To screen a host family you will login on our website, click the link called "Paperwork" and you will see "Host Family Screening F-1 Programs". You will need to print the Host Family Placement Checklist, "Host Family Interview", "Reference Review" and "Criminal Background Consent Form.

## Host Family Orientation Paperwork

You will need to conduct a *host family orientation* prior to student arrival and a separate *student/host family orientation* once your student arrives. Orientation meetings are set up *after* a potential host family's reference and criminal background checks have been run by the Quest National Office, and approval has been given to you. For this meeting you will need the Host Family Application Agreement, Host Family Handbook and the House Rules Forms. You will download the material needed for the orientation from the representative login area of our website.

You should be very familiar with the content of the Host Family Handbook as you will use it as an outline for your orientation with the host family. You will need to print a copy that will be used as your *master copy* and will help you to highlight the important details with the host family.

CSIET regulations require that you follow the rules for completing host family screening and orientation. Failure to do so may result in non-payment.

- Host Family screening paperwork must be completed and submitted to the Quest National office prior to student's arrival and no later than 15 days after completion/signature.
- Paperwork must be turned in all together with the Host Family Placement Checklist.
- Host families must be interviewed in the home with all family members present.
- Prior to obtaining host family signatures you are required to review the contents of the documents being signed, which must be done in person.

## Student Arrival Orientation

For your student arrival orientation you will download the Orientation Agenda, Orientation Agreement, Student Handbook & Appropriate Behavior information. More details regarding orientation are found in the Orientation section of this training manual.

## Monthly Report Forms

Monthly reports are submitted online and should be filled out by the Quest Representative and not by the host family. Monthly reports are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Failure to submit reports on time will result in reduced supervision payments.

### **Paperwork Status**

This area of the website provides you with updated information regarding the status of your paperwork for each host family. Our staff will update the database as documents are received. Please do not call the Quest National Office for answers about your paperwork status; you will utilize the login area to obtain this information.

### **Student Information**

All of the students who selected your schools will appear in this field. You will have your contact information for each student/host family placement in this area.

### **Student Profiles**

CSIET Regulations do not allow us to post full Student Applications to potential host families. The student application has been broken down into pages that will be posted for potential host families and for your files. Families will receive the full application once the placement is completed. Student last names, email address, city and other potentially explicit information that might attract sex offenders has been removed from the profile that will be available.

It is the Quest Representative's responsibility to review the student profile with the host family in order to secure a host family placement. You will receive the profile via email attachment and it will be in PDF format.

## **Representative Payment Definitions**

### **Placement Pay**

Representatives will be paid a Placement Fee and a Supervision Fee. Placement fee payment is for recruiting and screening host families. If you do not recruit the host family, you will be compensated only for the screening of the family. If you recruit a host family, but are unable to screen them, you will be compensated for recruitment only. Placement fees are sent once all placement paperwork has been submitted to the Quest National Office. Paperwork must be accompanied by the Host Family Placement /Orientation checklist. All documents must be sent together AND within 15 days of completion and/or prior to the student's arrival. Paperwork prior to student's arrival is a requirement of CSIET, failure to send paperwork within the required time-frame may result in forfeit or penalty in payment.

### **School Officials who Recruit Host Families**

Quest International works with several schools who assist us in recruiting host families. Often times it is the mentality that because schools are provided a great service by Quest and are not charged for this service, they will find or help find host families in their community. In cases where school officials recruit the host family, the Quest Representative will not be paid for recruitment, but will be compensated for screening the potential family.

### **Supervision Pay**

Supervision pay will be made in January and June for the Monthly Reports that were submitted on time. Failure to submit Monthly reports by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month will result in non-payment for that month.

### **Student requested "Change of Host Family"**

This is a change of family at the student's request. Quest Representative will be responsible for the recruiting and screening of new host family and all paperwork required must be submitted for full placement payment to be made. The only exception is when the student and/or school official has recruited his/her own family. In this case, the rep. will be paid for paperwork and interview.

### **Pay for moving a student on Probation or Warning**

Should the host family ask the student to leave their home, Quest will charge a move fee to the foreign partner and Reps will be paid full placement fee to locate and screen another host family. It is very important that if you have a student with behavior issues that you document this with an incident report and possible Probation Letter prior to the family requesting a move. If we do not have an incident report, we cannot charge the foreign partner to move a student who then appears to have no issues. Do not wait to report student behavior issues- please use the incident report found in the Rep. login section of our website.

### **Welcome Families /Temporary Family**

Host families should be recruited for the length of time the student has enrolled in the program; year (10 months) or semester (5 months). If you need to make a placement with a welcome or temporary family please be aware that you will be paid for welcome families, but are responsible for the replacement family without additional payment. Family interviews, paperwork and orientations must be conducted for replacement families. If you are not able to recruit a new family and Quest moves your student out of your area, the fee paid to you for placement will be deducted out of your supervision fee payment.

### **Double Placements**

Double placement pay will be for recruiting and screening one family and holding one orientation. European and Latin American partners are not likely to accept double placements. All double placements must be pre-approved by the Quest National office prior to confirming placement with host family. Double placements for two students from the same country are not acceptable.

### **Monthly Reports**

Reports are due at the end of the month. For year students, nine (9) monthly reports are due throughout the year. For semester students, four (4) monthly reports are due throughout the semester. Monthly reports sent after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month will be not be paid. Quest staff will call your student and family to obtain a report.

### **Moving Student to New Host Family**

It is the Quest Representative's responsibility to properly outline the financial obligations of the host family prior to securing a placement. If a host family asks you to move the student, or claims they can no longer host a student because they did not anticipate the cost or were not given detailed information about hosting, you will not be compensated for finding a new host family. Quest will contact all families to ask that they fill out an "Exit Evaluation" form which will be signed by the host family. This form will ask the host several questions about their local representative, screening procedures used, as well as information to indicate why they are no longer going to host.

### **Student Group Size**

The number of total students a local rep. can supervise will be at the discretion of the Quest International National Office. Local representatives who prove to be overwhelmed with students will have their number of students reduced. We suggest no more than 10 per local representative.

### **Quest Representative Hosting a Student**

As a Quest representative you may host a student and you will be paid as a host family, but you cannot be paid to act as the Local Representative for the student you are hosting. Monthly Reports cannot be conducted by you or anyone in your family. Your student will need to have his/her own local Quest Representative who will be paid for supervision. Your help in recruiting a representative will be needed; this person cannot be a relative.

### **Early Student Returns**

Students who leave the program early; your payment will be based on the most recent monthly report form received by the Quest International National Office.

## Quest International F-1 Program Definitions

### Junior /High School Program

Junior is for students 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grades/High School is 9<sup>th</sup>-12 PG

### Year Program

Is defined by a school year, which is 10 months or as determined as a “school year” by the school in which the student is enrolled. Students will arrive in August/September or in January and will depart approx 1-10 days after school is finished. Final departure date is determined by host family.

### Semester Program

Is defined by a 5-month school semester; or as determined as a “school semester” by the school in which the student is enrolled. Students may arrive in August/September or in January and will depart 1-10 days after school is finished. Final departure date is determined by host family.

### Extension Program

This program is defined by a current F-1 student who wants to start a new school year or semester with the same host family and school OR new school, new host family. Extension Program includes local representative supervision, school acceptance and re-application administration.

### Summer Programs

Quest offers several summer programs: ESL Adventure, University Tours and Summer Camps; please read more about these programs in the back of this manual. Students wishing to remain with their host family over the summer will need to request permission from Quest International in advance in order to remain with the host family. Please contact the National Office if you become aware of a student who wishes to remain during the summer. You will be compensated for local representative supervision. Students and or natural families may not make arrangements directly with Quest Host families for continuation of host family stay. Students who are caught making direct arrangements will be terminated from the program, the I-20 visa will be revoked and program fees will not be refunded.

### Tutoring/English Help

Natural Families must agree to pay for Tutoring and /or private English lessons for those students whose English has been determined to be below standard by the private school.



## The F-1 Student

### **Student Visa Information - What is an F-1 Student?**

Students enter the U.S. on an F-1 visa, which is valid for up to 5 years. Many students will attend more than one year of high school and may remain in the same school and with the same host family for consecutive years. The F-1 visa is sponsored by the private or public school and strict guidelines must be met in order for a student to maintain his/her visa. Quest International works closely with schools to ensure students behavior and academics are maintained throughout the program. Failure to follow school and/or Quest International rules and regulations may result in a visa termination by the school. Students must understand the importance of the roles of both his/her school and Quest International.

### **What does Quest International look for when screening International students?**

Quest International works with foreign partners who do the pre-screening of students. Our partners recruit only those students who they feel will be excellent candidates for the program. Quest International selects its students based on maturity, English capability, adaptability and academic strengths. Quest International students are considered ambassadors for their country. Their attitude and behavior must reflect the highest standards set by this program. Students must be open to new cultures, be willing to make lifestyle adjustments and to do so understanding the fact that they have chosen to participate in this cultural exchange experience.

### **Student Acceptance Requirements**

- **Academics** - We review the grades, teacher recommendations and remarks, type of school the student is attending and student class ranking. We also look for patterns in grading. Grades should be consistently good without a recent decline in performance. A “C” or better in all subjects is the minimum we look for.
- **Age** – High school students are 15-18 years old and 11-14 years old for the Junior Exchange program, however, once in a while we are able to place an older or younger student where schools accept such applicants. Students will not be older than 19 years of age.
- **Language** - Most students are given a SLEP test (tests listening, reading comprehension), have an oral interview by their English Teacher, and have a teacher recommendation for their overall language ability. Students must be able to meet minimum English requirements.
- **Essay** - Students must present an essay that adequately describes their personality and home life. The essay must be positive and friendly.
- **Adaptability** - All students are challenged to explain how and why they feel they can adjust to the differences of their American host family, school friends and culture.
- **Maturity** - Based on parent comments, teacher comments, foreign partner recommendations and other data, students are selected if they can display a maturity level that will sustain them through their school year abroad.
- **Interests/Activities** - Students should show a variety of interests in studying, sports, music or other hobbies. We also consider accomplishments within their interests.

### **Student Medical Insurance**

All students must arrive with full coverage medical insurance. Students should have a copy of insurance coverage in the English language, with a U.S. phone contact number for the insurance company with them. This information is also available under Students in your login section of the website. Please see the [Insurance](#) section of this manual for more information.

### **School Attendance**

Students are expected to attend school regularly and on time, to abide by all school regulations and follow all school policies. School officials have the ability to terminate a student’s visa and it is important your students understand the role of their school. If a school reports an uncooperative attitude or has other complaints about the student, please notify the National Office immediately. Reports of bad behavior, poor attendance, and/or failing grades may result in written “Probation” and/or expulsion from school. School expulsion will result in termination from the Quest International program with no

opportunity for a placement in another school. Students must maintain a “C” average in all classes, follow all school rules and policies and be able to communicate and follow coursework in English.

### **Student Financial Responsibilities**

- Students are responsible for purchasing their own personal use items such as shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, razors, etc.
- Transportation not provided by the host family is not covered in program fees
- Students may not borrow money from their host family
- Students must bring their own phone and or phone card. Host families are not allowed to sign phone contracts for students. Quest students are given this information prior to departure from their country and should not ask a family to sign a phone contract.
- Students should bring their own computer. Host families are not obligated to let student use their home computer. Please make sure your host families are aware of the potential dangers of allowing students to use their computer. Quest recommends to the foreign partner that all students come with their own computer.
- Students must have an adequate monthly stipend from their natural family; we recommend \$250-\$500 per month depending on the location.
- Students are responsible for paying for their entertainment with friends and or host family, movies, sport events etc.

### **Hygiene**

Students are instructed by the Foreign Partner prior to departure of the hygiene standards in America. Showering daily must be an adapted practice. Students are expected to wear deodorant and keep their hair clean. Students must wash their clothing often and keep up their appearance. Depending on the country, you may have to discuss personal hygiene with your student.

### **Personal Relationships**

Students are expected to learn about American people and customs, not just get academic credit. It is the student’s job to make any cultural adjustments necessary to “fit in”. A host family is NOT a hotel, and therefore the student is expected to talk with the host family, share his/her culture, and learn about the host families customs and traditions. The student is expected to make American friends, participate in school activities and develop relationships with the people around him/her.

Romantic relationships are discouraged, because they isolate the student to spending most of his/her time with one person, rather than learning about and spending time with others. These relationships come with other risks as well, such as emotional distress, STDs, and pregnancy. Sexual conduct which results in pregnancy will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Quest International has a pamphlet available for students regarding sexual behavior and misconduct called “appropriate behavior.” This will be distributed at the student orientation.



## The F-1 School

## **Schools**

The F-1 visa that Quest students enter the U.S. on is sponsored by the school that the student will be attending. The school issues a document called an "I-20" prior to arrival, which the student then takes to the consulate or embassy in their home country in order to obtain the "F-1" visa.

Quest has partnerships with many schools across the country to provide student applicants with a diverse range of possibilities for their American education. Quest offers a variety of schools including non-secular religious, public and academy type schools. These schools differ in price of tuition, affiliation, school size, AP classes, ESL opportunities and more.

Without the partnership between Quest International and these schools, we would be unable to place students in your area. We encourage you to develop a positive and supportive relationship with your schools. Our goal is to help increase their student enrollment and secure future host family placements.

## **Student School Selection**

Once a student has been accepted into the Quest International program, they are given an opportunity to select their top three preferred schools. Quest's foreign partners help the students select schools that meet their needs and the school requests are sent with the student application.

The F-1 program staff in the Quest National Office contacts schools on the list to start the application process. You will be notified of a student's request to attend one of your schools by the Quest National office and your assistance in getting acceptance may be required. This may also include picking up the I-20 document and sending it by Fed Ex to the National Office.

Students coming on an F-1 visa often want to stay and graduate from an American school, and will be paying a considerable amount in tuition fees. Our goal is to ensure that the school is a good match for the student, and that the student is a good match for the school. Quest always tries to place students in one of their top three school choices first, but in some cases that is not possible due to availability or student qualifications. Please let the Quest National office know if you have school spaces and/or families available and waiting for students, that way we can make recommendations and redirect students to your school as necessary.

## **School Application Process**

Every school's application process is different. Some schools require a local representative visit to the school prior to admitting students from a new partner agency. Some schools will accept as many students as we send them, others set a limit on the number of students or particular countries represented at their school. Additionally, some schools require host family contact information before a student will be accepted. Depending on the school's acceptance procedure, we may either contact you first to notify you that we have applied a student to a school near you, or wait until a student has been accepted before we engage your help in finding a host family. We never want to burden our representative with more students than he/she can place, so please let us know how many students you believe you can place per semester.

## **School Rules and Regulations**

Each school has its own rules regarding student acceptance, class scheduling, sports participation, and graduation, etc. Quest takes great pains to let students know these rules prior to enrollment. Students are not allowed to make demands to participate in these activities or particular classes, if it goes against the school's guidelines. If a student has a specific request and asks for approval prior to arrival, Quest can assist in trying to satisfy those needs, however, once the student agrees to attend a particular school, he/she is agreeing to abide by the rules of their school.

Demanding behavior from the student can be damaging to Quest International's reputation with school officials and will not be tolerated. During orientation you will discuss appropriate ways for students to

approach school officials. (See the *Orientation* section of this manual for more information). If you become aware of demands or requests made by the student, please contact the Quest National Office.

### Cooperating with Your Schools

- Schools want to be informed. Please do your best to keep your relationship with your student's school professional and courteous.
- Know the name of your contact at the school and introduce yourself as the local representative for Quest International students. This person may be a student counselor, the international student coordinator, or other school administrator.
- Never press school officials to accept a student, particularly if they have already accepted their maximum number of students. The school would be more willing to accept an exchange student from the Quest International remembering that you kindly abided by their rules.
- Call your school(s) once a month to check on your student(s)' progress as required by the Mid-Year and Final Evaluation Form. This builds a friendly working relationship between you and the school official.
- If a school calls you with a problem or request, deal with it immediately and contact the National Office if you are unable to quickly resolve the problem or do not know the answer to the question.
- You may want to send thank-you notes or holiday greeting cards to your contact at the school.

### New School Recruitment

Quest International is open to recruiting new private schools for our F-1 program. Our office staff is ready to conduct a phone interview with any potential school you may send to us. By locating other private and public schools in your area, we can help you grow your local student placement program.

**We are happy to send you materials to help you recruit new schools.**

### Why Schools Should Work with Quest International

Quest International prides itself on quality students and quality school, host family, and community relationships. We recognize that every school has its own student selection criteria, policy, and procedures for student enrollment, and we make a great effort to understand each individual school's policies, procedures and expectations. Schools receive support through our experienced staff; the Quest F-1 Program Director will become familiar with your schools' procedures and will provide you with excellent service.

Quest International takes the headache out of running an international student program. We handle everything from promoting schools to overseas agencies, to submitting qualified applicants, conducting Skype interviews, making tuition payments, recruiting host families, conducting screening, placements, providing student supervision, and more. School officials will not have to deal with tedious correspondence to and from natural parents. Quest handles international phone calls, follow up emails, and works directly with foreign partners overseas on behalf of our schools. We work through our international partner offices to ensure that students are pre-screened by a registered agent overseas.

The best part is that all of the services Quest provides are at ***no cost*** to the school. That means an increase in the school's international student enrollment and the opportunity to have a diversified student body with none of the difficulties of managing the student/ host family placement.

### Services Quest International Provides:

- Promotion of schools to our many foreign partner offices
- Pre-screened student applicants from Europe, Asia, Latin America,
- Local Quest International representative
- FedEx Tracking labels for I-20 Shipments
- Support with I-20 transfers to and from other schools
- On time tuition payments via U.S. bank check
- Student Skype interviews
- Finding and screening host families (including criminal background checks)
- Proof of student medical insurance
- 24-hour Quest Emergency Line
- Disciplinary Support
- Supervision of host family placement
- Moving students to new host families
- Disseminating information, tuition agreements, etc. to natural parents

Students coming on an F-1 visa often want to stay for multiple years and graduate from an American school. Quest provides students with the opportunity for an extended program and we offer support to our schools during the student's extended program.

### Student Applications

Quest compares the student's qualifications with the acceptance requirements of each school's criteria. If a student does not meet the qualifications necessary to attend their school of choice, we redirect them to another school. Occasionally, we find students who are on the edge of meeting the minimum requirements, and in those cases, Quest will contact school staff to ask if they would be willing to review the application. In order to speed up the application process, we scan the student application and upload it as a PDF to our webpage. Because the PDFs are so large, we find that making them available to download is much easier than trying to send them via e-mail.

### School List and Arrangements

Quest school relationships are represented through the local Quest Representative. Representatives are not permitted to use Quest school contacts, lists or relationships to create or conduct similar business outside the role as a local or Regional representative for Quest International. Representatives may not represent a Quest school for any other agency overseas or within the U.S. Quest Representative may not independently represent a current or prior Quest student with any Quest school without the express consent from Quest International.

### School Tuition Payments

Quest will provide as a service, direct payment of tuition to the school. Quest International does not assess any additional fees for the service of paying tuition fees directly to the school in advance. All fees received for tuition are paid directly to the school.

### Tutoring/English Help

Natural families agree to pay for tutoring and/or private English lessons for those students whose English has been determined to have misrepresented in the application process and deemed necessary by school staff.

### Quest International School Partner Manual

Quest has created a School Partner Manual that you can use when meeting with new schools. It gives school officials important information about the services we provide and the procedures that make our job easier. This manual can be sent to you upon request, often times we send it directly to the schools.



## The Host Family

## Host Family Responsibilities

- Host family should be interested in their student's culture and be willing to share their culture and customs with the student.
- Host Family must be made aware of the fact that hosting an international student can mean certain lifestyle changes. Students will need supervision and to feel that they are a part of the family. The host family will have to enforce rules and may have to discipline their student. They may need to pick them up from and drop them off to social events and/or school activities. Families should be willing to participate at this level, as it is not a room and board situation but rather a new family member that will become a part of their life.
- Student must be provided food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Food items for making lunch are to be available to the student. Host families do not have to make the lunch; this can be the student's own responsibility. Families may not ask the student to pitch in money for groceries, or ask student to buy their own food or drinks.
- When eating dinner out, it is the student's responsibility to pay their own way. It is ok for the family to treat their student, but it should be clear to the student that this is a one time treat and not to always expect it. We ask host families to limit how often they eat out, as it becomes costly for the student. Cooking meals and sharing mealtime with their student is an important part of the exchange.
- Student's bedroom may be shared with another child of the same gender and in the same age range. A separate bed must be provided for the student; cots are not acceptable. Students must have a quiet place where they can study; this may be the bedroom.
- Quest is not responsible for reimbursement for items purchased by host family to accommodate hosting a student i.e.; a new bed, linens or any other items they choose to purchase.
- Student may want to participate in sports or after school activities and may need the host family's help with transportation. Students are here to experience as much as they can and they often want to participate in these activities. Please ask host families to be open to driving them if possible, or at least willing to help them find transportation solutions.
- The host family is not responsible for transportation to and from school, but it would be nice if they make arrangements to do so- if possible. You must ask your host families for accurate information on transportation services in the area for the student to get to and from school and the estimated commute time.
- Host family stipend money may not be used to pay rent, mortgage or utilities. It is not to be considered income, but rather a stipend, which helps offset the cost of hosting. Host families may not ask student for money or make any private arrangements for monthly stipends to be paid by the student.
- Host family is responsible for keeping the home warm and safe. It is unacceptable for a family to place a student in a bedroom without central heating. The family may not charge the student for things such as heaters or utilities.
- Host family must ensure the safety of their student at all times. Students may not be left alone overnight in the home. The host family is responsible for finding acceptable supervision for their student should they need to leave town or a take a trip away from home. It is the host family's responsibility to find a friend, neighbor or relative where the student can stay or have an adult member over the age of 25 come to stay with the student. The Quest Representative is NOT responsible for locating temporary supervision. Quest will not make payments to substitute families for supervising a student.
- Host family must be able to pick their student up at the airport (the same applies for returning them upon their departure).

### Host Family Definition

A Host Family by definition may be a single person without children, a single parent with children, a couple without children, or a couple with children, retired couples whose children are grown, or a “welcome family” who wishes to host a student for a shorter period of time (welcome families may turn into the permanent family depending on the family’s situation). Host families may be drawn from a range of age, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. Host homes may be apartments, condominiums or single-family dwellings. The neighborhood must be safe and the home must be tidy.

### Host Family Commitment

- Host families should be recruited based on a 5 or 10 month commitment depending on the length of student program.
- If the host family will travel for short periods of time, they are responsible for locating a suitable family to supervise their student.
- A Quest student must not be left alone in the host family home overnight or for any longer period of time.
- Student may stay with friends, neighbors or relatives for long weekends and up to one week. It is the host family’s responsibility to ensure the safety of their student during an absence.
- Quest International is not responsible for finding a family to “babysit” the student should they travel away from the home without the student.
- Quest will not pay persons or families to “babysit” a student.
- In some instances after committing to host, a family may experience financial difficulties or personal family turmoil and will ask you to move the student. If this happens, please contact the National Office to notify us of the pending move and ask the family permission to allow the student to remain with them until you are able to recruit a new family

### When a Quest Representative should contact the National Office

- If a host family moves, we must receive notification so we can keep their address information up to date and their monthly payment can be received.
- You are aware that a host family has asked their student for extra money to cover any expenses.
- Host family tells you a student has asked them for a private payment/ arrangement. This is not allowed and we must be notified immediately.
- Before you move a student. If it is an urgent move, you must contact Quest using the emergency line, but you may **not** move a student without contacting the Quest National office first.
- Student has reported any information or feelings of sexual tension or abuse in the home.
- The student is going to stay with friends or relatives for longer than a weekend.

### Welcome Families

As the start of school approaches, and if a “permanent” host family cannot be found, we encourage representatives to talk to families about being a “welcome family”. This is a family that agrees to host the student from 2-4 weeks, giving you time to find a permanent family. A welcome family is screened like a permanent family, meets the student at the airport, helps him/her get settled at school, and takes care of the student while other families are recruited. Often times welcome families become so attached to the student that they do not want the student to be moved and choose to become permanent families. Certainly this is not the case every time, but it is a good way to expose a new family to the idea of hosting a student, even if they can only keep the student for a few weeks.

### Double Placements

Sometimes a host family will indicate they can accommodate 2 or more students. Double placements must be approved by Quest and its foreign partner prior to committing 2 or more students to a family. Students want their own American experience and sometimes feel that sharing a family takes away from this experience. Double placements involving two students from different countries are much easier for

us to approve. Two students from the same country are never allowed. If you have a family who expresses an interest in 2 or more students, please call the Quest National Office for approval.

### Host Family Payments

- Host families are paid a monthly stipend for hosting to help off-set the cost of hosting. This stipend comes directly from the Quest National Office, but in some cases the school might handle the stipends.
- Quest is solely responsible for monthly stipends to host families. Please advise your students that they are **not** to give any money to host families, or try to negotiate monthly payments with host family.
- Host families must agree to the monthly stipend amount prior to signing the Host Family Agreement. Host families may NOT ask their students to pay additional money. If you have any questions about this, please contact us.
- All host family stipends issued by Quest International will be paid monthly on the last Friday of the month. Hosting days are pro-rated, so host families may receive a pro-rated payment for hosting if the student was not in their home for the full month.

### Recruiting the *Right* Host Family

Please be sure you use good judgment when recruiting host families. It is essential that you choose a long term family who is willing to host and foster a positive cultural exchange experience for their student and family. Hosting is a commitment and it will require some additional effort from the host family, so please be sure to recruit the right type of host family from the start. In doing so you will avoid having to deal with moving students due to unrealistic expectations and/or families who simply were not given enough honest information about what hosting a student will entail.

This is not a room and board program. Your selection of host families reflects directly on your ability to use good judgment. Quest International requires that you select your families carefully. You must put thought and effort into properly educating your host families. Have you prepared them for the exchange experience? Did you provide them with detailed information about the cost of hosting, the responsibilities and possible situations they may face hosting a teenager? Did you discuss “relationship” aspect of the exchange? Did you make them feel that you and Quest staff would support them in their efforts?

The host family stipend is not to cover the cost of rent/mortgage or house utility bills. If a family mentions anything about paying for bills, this is a clear indication that they are not hosting for the right reasons and Quest will not accept this family.

Host families who choose on their own to purchase items for the student may not request reimbursement from Quest International. Quest will not purchase beds, linens or other items the family deems necessary for hosting a student.

Quest will not reimburse the family for medical bills they paid for their student. These and many other topics need to be discussed with the host family prior to placing a student in their home.

Questions to look out for:

Family asks if student can babysit for their children.

Family makes comments about student being able help with a business or garden/yard.

Family talks about student staying home with an elderly family member.

Family seems overly concerned about food expense and or cost of utilities.

Family is on welfare or receiving food stamps.

Someone in the home indicates they do not want to host.

## Student/Host Family Private Arrangements

This topic must be covered in both the student and host family orientations.

A private arrangement may include one or more of the following:

A student asks Quest Representative's assistance to attend the same school and host family, but not keep their organization in home country.

A student asks Quest Representative to assist them in finding a different family and claim their natural parents will pay the host family directly.

A student asks Quest Representative for help in extending the program directly and not asking their partner organization overseas and/or asks Quest Representative for information about another U.S. based organization's fees.

A student asks Quest Representative to extend his/her program, but don't want to be in the Quest program.

A host family asks Quest Representative for help in letting their student extend without the Quest program and/or without the partner organization overseas.

A host family asks Quest Representative or school for assistance in taking legal guardianship of student.

Quest Representatives must agree to inform Quest International of any private arrangement requests or knowledge of private arrangements; failure to do so may result in termination and/or legal action.

Should Quest become aware of any attempt to make private arrangement with host families or schools, legal action will be taken.

Some students feel that once they have developed a relationship with a host family, they no longer need the "supervision" provided by Quest International and its representatives. We **absolutely discourage** host families from engaging in private "deals" with their host students and their natural families. Not only does this undermine the time and work you put into recruiting, but if other students get the same idea, you will lose all of your host families. We know of host families who made private arrangements with their student and never received the payment. Natural parents do not speak the language and there is no recourse for the host family once they agree to a private arrangement.

Private arrangements put the burden on the host family to make the placement work regardless of the student's behavior. If a student becomes a problem you may not step in to help and the host family is stuck with no easy way out. Private arrangements make the host family not only financially liable for the student, but can bind them legally in a lawsuit if the student causes an accident or is involved in a liability suit. Host families will also have to take responsibility for medical bills that do not get paid and will receive no further support or counseling from you or from the Quest National Office who normally receives a great deal of support from the foreign partner office. The risks far outweigh any benefits.

Private arrangements also refer to "summer stays", in which the student lives with the host family during the summer break (June, July, August) and goes back to school in September. Quest offers this as a **paid** program to students and natural parents. Quest requires students to discuss this with their area representative so that you can approach the host family and get an agreement from them. Families will be paid more per month during a summer stay to cover the extra costs of food and transportation, and you will be compensated for supervision for the summer months.

### Legal Guardianship

Please advise your families NOT to agree to obtain legal guardianship for a student at any time. Legal guardianship is a huge commitment; a family will essentially bind themselves to the student legally and everything that comes with it, including complete financial support, emotional, and legal obligations. Legal guardianship is not easily reversible; students will become the financial obligation of the family until they turn 18 years of age. Quest will not be able provide support for a family in trouble after having obtained legal guardianship for a foreign student.

## Host Family Transportation Obligation

You will need to ask the host family how their student will get to and from school. Some schools provide bus service, but some do not. Host families are not obligated to provide transportation for the student. If it is convenient and they can do it- that's great, however it is not their responsibility. The family can assist with travel arrangements (local bus or train) if transportation is not provided by the school. Host families are not responsible for the cost of outside transportation.

## Frequently Asked Questions (the program in a nutshell)

- **What is the length of stay?** Most of our students arrive in August for a 10-month academic stay, returning to their home country in June. There are a few students who only come for a semester, a 5-month stay. Some arrive in August and stay until January and some arrive in January and stay until June.
- **What is expected of the exchange student?** Our students are here on an academic, cultural exchange program. They must attend and participate in all of their classes and maintain at least a "C" average. Prior to his/her departure to the US, your student has had an orientation, explaining the rules and regulations of the program. Quest International rules include obeying all local, state, and federal laws. Students are also expected to follow host family rules including family responsibilities (e.g., participating in household activities, curfews, chores, etc.)
- **What is the host family responsible for?** The host family is responsible for room and board, which may include providing students with lunch food items so he/she can pack a lunch from home, a separate bed and a quiet place to study. A caring environment is essential when screening for a host family. A student is not a supplement to income, but rather they offer the family an enriching exchange experience.
- **What types of families are acceptable?** We accept many types of families. Single parent families, families with children of any age, childless families and families with grown children retired persons and in some cases single people, if the student agrees.
- **What are the rewards of hosting?** The rewards are many! Family members will learn and grow with the experience of hosting a foreign exchange student. The focus of our program is for host families and students to share their cultures, customs and traditions, as you build a life long friendship!
- **What happens if the student is ill or in an accident?** Quest International students have their own medical insurance. Students receive an insurance card and claim forms prior to arrival.
- **What about money?** The student's natural parents agree to send adequate spending money. This money should be enough for personal hygiene items, clothing, social activities, transportation, trips, school expenses, and telephone calls to their home country.
- **Is the host family expected to show the student America?** They are not obligated, but if the family is taking a vacation, they may include the exchange student. Quest also offers excursions/trips throughout the year. Optional trips are organized and chaperoned by Quest International and must be paid for in advance. Keep in mind that this is an academic program with opportunities only for those students who are meeting their academic standards. Participation in these trips is the financial responsibility of the exchange student.

## How to Recruit Host Families

The selection and matching of students and host families is based on the criteria appropriate to the exchange program – no discrimination is made on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sex, or marital status. Once in a while Quest receives applications directly from families and we call these "direct placements." Occasionally the school will also help in finding host families, but this is quite rare, so be prepared to network and recruit on your own. It is important that you understand the role of the host family, and how to recruit.

### Finding the Host Family

1. **KNOW YOUR STUDENTS:** Study the student's profile, pay attention to interests, hobbies, sports, family background, career plans, etc.
2. **PROCEED DISCREETLY:** When speaking on the phone for the first time with a prospective host family, be sure that you do not commit any particular student to that family. You may visit the home and realize that there are some strong reasons why you should not make the placement. Trying to back-peddle can be difficult. Don't make promises until you have met with the family and everything checks out ok.
3. **DON'T STEREOTYPE HOST FAMILIES:** We have had many single parent homes, retired couples, families with or without children host and have a wonderful experience. Usually hard working, middle class families who are busy and active are the ones who make the best candidates, but don't rule out some of those non-traditional homes who may also be able to offer security and love.
4. **PERSISTENCE PAYS:** Do not become discouraged with how many "No's" you receive. It is very common to roll through your telephone book and call all of your family and friends assuming you will find many host families. Typically, it will not be your friends and family members who decide to host. You will need to reach into the community to find host families. You will get a lot of families who say "No", but you will also find families who say "Yes". There are definitely families in your community who want to host. All you need to do is get the word out.
5. **MAKE A PLAN:** Develop a plan as to how you would like to look for families in your area. There are many options. If you run out of ideas, the National Office can give you new ones.
6. **PERSONALIZE YOUR JOB:** Do not simply go around asking people if they want to host a foreign student. Learn everything you can about the particular student. Take him/her under your wing and carry the profile with you. Talking about a child with a name and a face, rather than the "general idea" of hosting will warm the hearts of your audience.

### Recruiting Acceptable Host Families

- Single individuals/parents can host, however the exchange student and his/her natural parents must be willing to accept a single person placement, which in most cases is not a problem.
- A single man may **not** host a female student. Consideration will be given to a single father with children residing in his home and if at least one of the children is female child.
- If the bedroom is being shared, the students must be of the same gender and their ages must be close enough for compatibility. Young children sharing a room with an exchange student is not permitted.
- The neighborhood must be safe and respectable. It should reflect a well-kept and healthy environment.
- Quality placements are important. Quest International does not discriminate, however, serious consideration should be taken when inspecting the home. Disrepair and unhealthy living considerations are **unacceptable**. Neighborhoods must be safe, the home must be tidy and in good condition.
- Consideration is given to the size and condition of the home. Quest International requires that a student have his/her own bed. Cots, hide-a-beds and/or mattress on the floor are **neither acceptable nor** permitted. Photos of the home and student's bedroom must be taken during the interview.
- Host families may be of any religion, but they may **not** require the exchange student to attend specific church services.
- Host families who ask about the stipend and show signs of wanting additional income are **unacceptable** host families. The stipend may not be used to cover rent, utilities or any other household costs other than food.

## Networking

You may be hesitant to call your neighbor down the street to ask her to host because you know that she does not have enough room in her home. But does she have any friends or connections in the community? Does she go to church or volunteer at her daughter's Brownie meetings? She could be a great help in finding a host family. Get her on your side. Ask her to help you by giving you some names of people you can call. If she is hesitant, ask her if she will call a few friends. Utilize the system of asking for two friends and ask them for two friends and so on... You will never run out of contacts this way. In fact, many Quest Representatives who were new to their community found several host families simply by networking.

## Overcoming Objections

Sometimes families will not be interested in hosting and they just don't want to tell you "No". Try to avoid being strung along like this. Give your families a time limit, such as 48 hours to let you know. Do not be afraid to push for an answer. If they do not want to do it, they will say so whether it's today or a week from today. You will be a lot less frustrated if you can get a yes or no and move on.

Host families will commonly disqualify themselves from our program based on assumptions of what hosting entails. Some objections are qualified, for example, the family may not have enough room in the home. However, some objections are just a misunderstanding of what Quest is looking for. Here are some of the common objections you will run into and suggestions for how to handle them:

- ***Ten months is too long...***  
We also have students for one semester (five months). Perhaps they would feel more comfortable hosting as a "welcome family" (a family who commits only to a one month stay until a permanent family can be found)
- ***I / We don't have any children at home...***  
We have found that these are often very successful placements since you are able to devote your attention to the student. With no other children there is less chance of sibling rivalry or competition.
- ***I / We are single/retired...***  
We have had many successful placements in single or retired homes. It is just a matter of selecting a student who would fit well in this environment.
- ***I / We are not able to provide transportation for a student....***  
Our students generally wish to be as independent as possible. They are usually accustomed to using public transportation. Climate permitting, a bicycle is an excellent form of transportation. The student may need transportation on weekends or for special school activities, but often they make friends who can help with the driving.
- ***I / We are going on vacation...***  
Perhaps you would like to invite the student to join you? Many times the natural parents are happy to provide extra money for the student to accompany the host family. Alternatively, with sufficient notification, the student may stay with friends or relatives while you are away.
- ***I / We don't have an extra room...***  
Most of our students are happy to share a room with a person of the same sex within two years of their age.
- ***I / We work all day...***  
This is a common situation. Remember the student will be busy with studies and will be involved in extracurricular activities. Providing you are clear about your house rules, the student does not need to be supervised 24 hours a day. Remind the family that most exchange students come from families where both parents work and are comfortable with this type of environment.
- ***A friend had a bad experience hosting...***  
Not every exchange experience works out perfectly. We provide materials and orientations to help ensure a good experience for all. Proper supervision will help prevent problems from escalating. If any problem becomes unmanageable, it will be dealt with immediately. Would you like to speak with a few other Quest families who have had a good experience?

Try to spend some time talking with potential host families to determine what the objections may be. You are not a salesperson and we are not asking you to talk someone into hosting when they do not want to. This would only lead to problems down the road. However, you should always be prepared for objections and be able to handle them, as some of these objections are based on pre-conceived notions, rather than actual Quest program expectations.

## Host Family Placement Steps

**Step 1.** Schedule an appointment with the host family for an in-home interview; ask how many members of the family living in the home are 18 years or older and discuss the need to obtain criminal background check authorization forms signed by each adult member. Ask that all family members (if possible) will be present.

If the family has not filled out the Quest host family application, ask that they be prepared to spend the time it will take for you to walk them through it online at the start of your meeting.

Prior to the meeting, prepare a packet of materials to take with you:

- A copy of the Host Family Application (filled out online)
- The Host Family Interview form
- Background Check Authorization (one for each family member over the age of 18)
- Reference Review forms
- Host Family Handbook
- A Camera

During the interview, please note the following:

- Discuss the financial responsibilities of hosting as outlined in this manual. This is a requirement of your visit.
- Is the home environment suitable for an exchange student? Is there enough space?
- Ask to see the student's bedroom.
- Condition/cleanliness of the home, photos of the student's bedroom and the outside of the home are required.
- Ensure that there is a quiet place for the student to study.

It is very important that you give your honest opinion about the living conditions of the home and the suitability of the family members for hosting. If there is anything that concerns you, please contact the Quest office and let us know. The safety and welfare of our students is our priority and your assessment of the host family is critical to our program.

At the end of the interview, take a moment alone to finish the interview form and give the family a moment to privately discuss hosting a student. If the host family has passed your interview process and is still interested in hosting a student, ask them to fill out and sign the Criminal Background Check Authorization forms.

If the host family does not pass your interview, thank them for their time, and let them know you will get back to them. If you feel comfortable telling the family at that time that they are not qualified, feel free to do so. If you would prefer someone from the Quest National office contact them, let us know and we will assist you. If the host family is qualified but not interested in hosting a student at this time, leave your card and tell them you will check in with them next semester/next year.

**Step 2.** Arrange an appointment to conduct the Host Family Orientation. Before the meeting, print out the Host Family Agreement, House Rules, and The Host Family Handbook (if you did not take one with you to the interview). Take your Master Copy of the Host Family Handbook with you to use as your outline for the orientation. It is important that your master copy of the handbook be highlighted or marked with the required topics to cover during this orientation (for more information on what to cover,

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[info@questexchange.org](mailto:info@questexchange.org) [www.questexchange.org](http://www.questexchange.org) [Skype Quest.International](https://www.skype.com/questinternational)  
 (415) 665-3900 (415) 665-3902 Fax

see the orientation section of this manual). Discuss the financial responsibilities and the monthly stipend amount. The Host Family Agreement Form requires you to fill in a monthly stipend amount, so you must have accurate host family monthly payment information prior to attending this meeting. Please help the family fill out the House Rules. This document is very important and discusses the use of computers, phone etc. Please be prepared to take the time you will need to cover all topics with your host families.

**Step 3.** Send all paperwork to Quest International within 15 days of the home visit. Scan and email or fax the following (email preferred):

- The Host Family Application Agreement
- Criminal Background Consent Forms, must be discussed and signed
- Host Family Interview Form
- Host Family References
- House Rules
- Host Family Placement Checklist

**Step 4.** Hold a Student Orientation meeting. This meeting is generally held as a group with all your students and host families. This orientation must be held within 2 weeks of your students' arrival; be sure to bring the Orientation Agenda and Student Orientation Agreements. Make sure students and host families sign this document. Send document to the Quest office via email or fax.

If you complete every one of the above steps, you will be assured a smooth and successful exchange year with your students, families and Quest. It is imperative that your paperwork be your number one priority. Never move a student to another home without consulting the Quest National Office.



## Supervision / Counseling

## Supervision

Your responsibility as a Quest Representative is to call and/or visit your exchange student at least once a month. You will also have to meet or speak with a host family member monthly in order to complete the required Monthly Report. We encourage you to keep regular contact with your school contact person as well. Please tell your students and host families to contact you if they have a problem, and not wait for your monthly visit to bring concerns to your attention. You will send Monthly Reports on each student via an online report form; these are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month for the previous month. You will access these forms through our website using your username and password.

Some “adjustment” time is expected, and it is important to address that with the family and the student as early as possible so that they can be prepared for it. Please include any warning signs you or the family might observe in your monthly reports. Anything that becomes a big problem needs to be addressed with the Quest National office and should not wait to be submitted in the monthly report. You should download an Incident Report Form and send it immediately to the National Office.

## Student Adjustment Cycle

**Arrival** – After preparation and the anticipation, students look forward to experiencing new adventures, excitements and cultural immersion.

**Settling** – School has started and students are adjusting to a new routine. Students are treated as a member of the family that includes responsibilities and chores. School may now be harder than expected, in addition to adjusting to family rules that are different than what they are accustomed to. Students at this time may be wondering why they wanted to be an exchange student.

**Questioning** – Students may think “what am I doing here?” They may feel a bit lonely or homesick, especially around the holidays. Everything that is familiar to them seems far away. They may even feel that many things are not as good as when they first arrived.

**Feeling Comfortable** – Students begin to feel better about the exchange program. Their English has improved, they have made new friends, and they are involved in the many school and community activities. Students may realize that they want to do more before the exchange program comes to an end.

**Departing** – Students are now thinking of their host country as “home.” Time is nearing for the student to return home and this will not be easy for them. They have had many experiences and made happy memories. The host family and student may feel both sad and happy about the pending student return home.

## Counseling and Problem Solving

If a student or host family contacts you regarding a problem, schedule time to speak with them individually so that you can assess the situation from both sides. Take the student out for lunch or a coffee and allow him/her to speak freely about the problem. Often, what you see is not always the actual problem, but rather the student or host family’s way of dealing with the problem. Encourage the student and family to communicate what is really bothering them privately before bringing them together for an open communication meeting. Document all student/host family issues using the Incident Report Form.

## Incident Report

If the problem is more involved or is past the point in which a conversation with the family and student can solve it, please submit the Incident Report Form prior to calling the Quest National Office for support. We must have you document the incident or describe the problem for us in writing, and we will take whatever action is necessary to help you solve the situation.

## Know Your Students

- Ask them to talk about their expectations while here in the U.S. Also encourage them to talk about their life in their home country.
- Spend quality time with your students. This gives you an opportunity to understand their personality and gain insight into their childhood, family life, goals, etc. Better overall understanding of the student will make it much easier for you to help them cope with homesickness and culture shock.

## Create a Relationship of Trust

- Make sure that your students are comfortable talking with you.
- Visit with your students a couple of times each semester (outside of Quest activities). Let your students know that you are there when they need you.
- It is important for your students to know that you can be impartial. Sometimes students think that you are a close friend of the family because you are a Quest Representative.
- Help the student understand that you are there to help them **and** the host family. *Remember, you are the liaison between the student and host family when problems arise.*
- Encourage host families to keep the lines of communication open as well.

## Student Problems

- When host family/student problems arise, it is important for you to setup a timeframe to discuss the issue.
- Include everyone involved with the student problem. In doing so, you can pinpoint the misunderstanding and resolve the conflict
- You must document student/host family conflicts in writing using the Incident Report Form. Please send this to us immediately so we can help you address the problem.

**Document Everything** – Whether you are working with the student, school, or host family, there must be a “paper trail.” The more we know, the better we can respond to questions or complaints that may be made months/years later. Accurate documentation of student problems will be helpful for everyone. Be precise, using direct quotes whenever possible. If you have written statements from the participants, be sure to include this with your report. Forward your Incident Report to the National Office via email or fax immediately.

## Counseling Techniques

### Communication

Communication is the golden rule of interpersonal relationships. No one can be expected to read someone else’s mind, so if someone has a problem with a particular situation, he/she should always communicate with others about it. Students and families should be encouraged to talk to one another first, but at the very least, talk to you about what they are experiencing. Some techniques for using effective communication to resolve conflicts include:

- Defining the problem
- Look for areas of agreement
- Seek to understand the feelings
- Rather than automatically defending your own viewpoint, try asking this question: *“Tell me why you think that’s true.”*

Conversations filled with buzz words and phrases such as “WE...US...OUR...What are you thinking?...How do you feel about the level of our communication?...How can we solve the problem?...Let’s consider, negotiate, resolve” can help correct a misunderstanding. Another example of good communication is to:

- **BREATHE – Before You Speak** – A simple strategy that can help increase patience and add perspective, gratitude and respect. It involves nothing more than pausing and breathing after the person to whom you are speaking is finished.
- Observe the conversations around you. You will notice that many of us simply wait for our chance to speak. We're not really listening to the other person, but simply waiting for an opening to express our own view. Remember, the key is to wait until the person has finished speaking—pause (for a few seconds) – take a breath, and then begin to speak.

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It helps to remember that adolescents are in the business of being different from you. They are trying to find their own niche in society, and not wanting to be carbon copies of their (host) parents. They may try a variety of things to stand out, including testing their boundaries, and shocking their parents, host parents, school administrators, and Area Representatives.

Teenagers are still in the process of development; experimenting, learning, and changing. For most of them, these changes will be positive — in 10 years they will most likely be independent and responsible adults. The majority of them will be married, raising families, going to school, working and living on their own. Eventually, just about all of them will become part of the social fabric and work force. They will have left behind their “inventive” hairstyles and pants that are falling off in their photo album pictures.

### **Homesickness & Culture Shock**

Culture shock is the recognition of very different cultural practices. Foreigners visiting America express stereotypical thoughts such as: Americans are extremely friendly, Why are people always smiling?, you eat a lot of fast food, your cars are very large, Americans are wasteful, etc. Not all culture shock is negative, and is merely how a student deals with these differences mentally and emotionally.

Homesickness is often associated with culture shock. Some students are simply so attached to their families at home that being away from them is very traumatic. Other students are overwhelmed by the differences between the cultures and they suddenly miss home very much. Some students suffer from homesickness and others never go through it at all. Sometimes the signs are clear: crying, isolation, calling home every day. Other times the signs are more subtle: moodiness, eating too little or too much, not participating in family activities.

Even though a student may be somewhat prepared to deal with these feelings, you may also need to assist. Encourage the family to involve the student in daily life, spend time together doing anything he/she might enjoy, work together in the yard, take the dog for a walk, prepare a meal together, etc. A host family should not feel guilty about their student's unhappiness. If the student continues to be unhappy and depressed long enough for you to be concerned, please contact the National Office.

Excessive phone calls from the student's natural parents can actually prolong homesickness and culture shock. Phone calls usually make people feel worse, not better. Encourage the family to limit his/her calls home to once or twice a month. If you find that the student's natural parents call his/her host family's home excessively and you feel they are hindering the student's adjustment, contact the national office so that we can notify our foreign partner to help us with the natural parents.

Holidays can be depressing for your exchange student. Encourage the student to share their traditions and customs with you and their family. Also, keeping the student actively involved in holiday celebrations here will not only help him/her busy, it will be a great lesson on American traditions.

## **Cultural Differences**

Undoubtedly, the most difficult part of the exchange will be resolving cultural differences. Knowing a little about some of these cultural differences ahead of time may help you identify a misunderstanding before it becomes a problem.

Standards for sexual behavior vary widely from culture to culture. Encourage the family to discuss their family's customs and traditions and church/community traditions. For example, some of our students come from cultures and families where sex is openly discussed; others expect sexuality to be a very private issue. Do let your student know what is acceptable.

Some students find it difficult to accept the control and supervision from their host parents. They may not understand that cities and towns in the U.S. are not always a safe place. Relate to your students how important it is for the host family to know where and whom they are with (at all times), just like their natural parents would want to know.

## **Host Family House Rules**

Students are expected to follow the house rules of the host family; failure to do so may result in a warning or probation. The student is expected to be a member of the family, so he/she should follow the same rules any other teenage student in that family would follow. These could include: chores, curfew, time limits on the phone and computer, taking shoes off after entering the house, expectations at meal times, etc. Tell the host family to be upfront with the student about these rules in the first few days after the student arrives. You should address the importance of house rules during your Student Orientation so that it is absolutely clear that these kinds of rules are normal and expected for the student. Quest requires that families submit a "House Rules" sheet, which will help them set expectations early in the placement. It is MUCH easier to ease off on house rules as the year progresses than it is to try to impose new rules as the year goes on.

It is also perfectly acceptable for a host family to "ground" an international student or take away TV, phone or internet privileges for breaking a house rule. In the simplest cases, disciplinary action taken by the host family should resolve some of these minor problems. Be sure the host family tells you about these instances, so that if the problem does persist, they can be used to justify further action taken.

## **Student Warning**

A warning is the notification of unacceptable behavior that could become grounds for probation. This could include: multiple instances of breaking house rules, failing grades, insubordination, disrespect of the host family or area representative, abusive language at school or at home, etc. The first step is a verbal warning, which can be issued by the area representative or host family and should be documented in an Incident Report.

## **Student Probation**

Probation is a *trial period* in which the student will have an opportunity to make changes and/or improvements. Notification of a student being placed on probation will be submitted to the foreign organization/partner who is obligated to notify the natural parents. Quest International will work together with the foreign partner in an effort to give guidance and support to the student. If improvements are not made, students risk expulsion from the Quest Program.

Students may be put on Probation at any time as deemed necessary by the Quest International Office. Probation letters alert the natural parents, student, school officials and foreign partner of behavior problems including, but not limited to:

- breaking host family rules
- behavior issues in the host family environment
- disciplinary problems in school
- failure to respect and abide by Quest International rules
- failing school subjects and/or lack of improvement in school curriculum
- any other situations as deemed appropriate by Quest International

A probation letter will clearly state what is expected of the student and the unacceptable behaviors that the student needs to change, in order to remain in the Quest exchange program.

Students who do not follow the rules will be placed on Probation and will be given time to show improvement. Probation letters will be signed by student; refusal to sign a probation letter will result in termination of the student from the Quest program. The conditions and length of probation is determined by Quest International. Probation terms may include a restricted amount of time for email correspondence and telephone calls to and from natural country, cell phones and personal computers taken away, and/or house restrictions imposed by the host family.

Quest International will not work at finding a new host family for students who are on probation and showing no improvement. The National Office may allow the student to find his/her own host family and fees may apply.

If a student on probation is asked to leave the host family home, Quest will evaluate the circumstances to determine if the student will be placed with another host family or will be terminated. If Quest agrees to find a new host family for a probation student, representative will be compensated and a fee will be charged to the student's natural family for the move.

Quest International will make every effort to support the student during this time, ensuring that students have been given a fair opportunity to remain in the program.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

Prior to their arrival, students sign and agree to comply with U.S. local, state, and federal laws. Students may be dismissed from the program and sent home for violation of these rules. The President of Quest International will make all decisions regarding student termination, based upon the review of Incident Reports and Probation Letters. Behavior that violates rules and regulations as set forth by Quest International and the school may result in termination from the program. Notification of dismissal will be forwarded to School, Natural Parents, Host Family and Student.

### **Students can be dismissed from the Quest International Program for the following reasons:**

- Failure to make appropriate changes in response to probation
- Diagnosed depression, eating disorder, anorexia/bulimia
- Failure to obtain permission to travel and/or permission for natural parent visits
- Expulsion from school
- inability to adjust to living with an American family following probation letters
- Failure to respect and abide by Quest International rules, or any other behavior discrediting the Quest International program

### **Immediate dismissal will result if a student:**

- Is caught using, selling, or possessing a controlled substance
- Is caught drinking and a police report has been filed
- Has broken a National, State, or Local law

Quest International regulations allow 3 working days for the student's natural family to prepare for the student's return.

**Quest International 1314 8th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122**  
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**(415) 665-3900 (415) 665-3902 Fax**

## Moving a Student

As a Quest International representative you must be involved in moving a student. There may be situations where it will be necessary to move a student to another host family. Reasons for moving a student may reflect one or more of the following: the host family is moving out of the area, serious illness or injury of a host family member, student/host family conflict that cannot be resolved, host family parent becomes unemployed. An Exit Evaluation form will be sent to all host families. The Quest National Office will notify the student's home country, natural parents, host families, and schools as to the reasons for the student move.

Once a move has been confirmed necessary, a new family must be found within 2 weeks. This gives the host family and student time to adjust to the idea of moving, and the representative time to find a new home. We recommend talking to the student's friends' families first. These are people that already know the student and are likely to want to help in his/her time of need. If friends are not an option, you may have to resort to other host family recruitment methods.

## Emergency Moves

Occasionally, an immediate move is necessary. Please call the Quest National Office immediately; you may use the emergency line. A host family may not dismiss a student from their home without first contacting you. In turn, the student may not leave his/her home without first contacting you. You will need to be present in order to move the student.

When a student has been moved (even temporarily), you are to:

- Notify the National Office of the new host family's name, address, and phone number **prior** to the student's move.
- Assure that the new host family has filled out the Host Family Application, including References and necessary Criminal Background Check Authorizations.



## Insurance

## Student Insurance

All students must arrive with full medical and emergency dental insurance. Some students have their own insurance provider that was chosen by the natural parents, while other students have chosen to be covered by the insurance provider offered through the Quest International program.

Quest is NOT an insurance provider. We offer an insurance option under a large group umbrella policy which allows students an affordable option. Quest will assist with claims issues ONLY if the student insurance is the policy that was offered through Quest.

We are familiar with the policy and procedures of a few companies, however we cannot assist with a long list of other insurance companies that are based in other countries. We need you to relay this information to the host family, and we hope they understand and respect our position in this matter. We ask host families to be prepared to help their student with filing a claim and following the insurance procedures.

Upon the student's arrival, and/or during orientation you need to ask the student for a copy of the documents he/she has brought with them. Students should have an insurance voucher or ID card. Please identify the student's insurance policy number and write down any telephone numbers you may need should a claim need to be filed. Please be aware that a visit to a doctor or hospital will require proof of insurance. Student and host family must have insurance information with them and be prepared to follow the proper procedures for getting the medical expenses paid by the insurance company. Any expenses owed at the time of treatment (co-pay, etc) are the student's responsibility.

Quest International cannot directly handle a claim; it must be done through the insurance provider. Please read all insurance information sent to you from Quest or given to you by the student, so that you can be familiar with the procedures of their insurance provider. Students should be prepared to pay in advance and collect the money through the claim process. It is absolutely necessary that host families follow these procedures for medical payments to be covered by the insurance provider.

## Insurance Coverage/Use

Student insurance is emergency travel insurance and covers illness or injuries that may occur during their exchange year. Routine physical exams (*for sports, etc.*) and immunizations are **not** covered. If your student requires a physical exam in the U.S., please advise your student that their natural parents are to be responsible for payment.

For students with insurance policies other than the one offered through Quest, it is advised that the host family contact the insurance company and be clear about who can treat the student, and if claim forms are necessary.

Host families are NOT responsible for their medical bills. Do not allow families to be persuaded to guarantee payment for the exchange student's medical treatment. Host family members are authorized to have the student treated for medical care *without* agreeing to be responsible for medical bills. Please contact the National Office immediately if you have any questions regarding insurance.

## Always list the student's NATURAL PARENT'S address on medical care paperwork!

The last thing we want is for a host family to receive calls from collections agencies over an international student's unpaid or delayed medical claim.

## If An Exchange Student Requires Non-Emergency Medical Attention

Please instruct your families to do the following:

- Take a claim form and or insurance voucher with them when they visit the hospital or their local doctor. Be sure that the doctor completes the form during the examination and instruct the Doctor's office staff that this form must be completed in its entirety before forwarding to the insurance company. Do not assume that the doctor will fill out the form completely; be sure to check the claim form before you leave the doctor's office.

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- Ask the doctor's office for an itemized bill. Before leaving the office, the student and host family should have a completed form and itemized statement denoting the care that was given. The insurance company will not process a claim without an itemized statement.

### **Hospital Emergencies**

In case of an emergency requiring hospitalization, take or send the student directly to the hospital. A Quest International representative and/or the student's host family must report to the National Office as soon as possible. Please use the 24 hour emergency line giving the following information:

- Student's name and country
- Nature of illness or emergency
- Address and telephone number where the student can be reached.
- Telephone number of attending physician / hospital

Quest International will be in contact with the natural family and the foreign partner office regarding emergencies.

### **Damage to Property**

Neither Quest International nor the host family will assume any financial responsibility for the acts of the student, whether willful or negligent, including damage to property, lost or stolen money. Quest and/or the host family is not responsible for insurance issues, including, but not limited to: paying medical bills at the time of treatment, paying for medical services provided to the student by any doctor or medical facility after an insurance claim has been denied.



## Student Travel

## Student Travel Policies

Host family, school, church or other organized trips are encouraged, but there are some restrictions. Students are allowed to travel with an adult and with host family approval and in some cases the approval of Quest International.

- Overnight trips require advance written permission from natural parents and host parents.
- The student's school must approve trips involving absence from school in advance.
- Travel also must be with an approved group or to visit persons known both to the student and natural parents. Quest International must give written approval for travel.
- Quest Group Vacation Travel- Every student will receive information about optional travel opportunities from their Quest Representative.
- Students traveling with their host families should expect to pay their own way. A host family who invites or plans a family trip with the student, should be very clear (from the earliest planning stages of the trip) about the cost of the trip.
- Host families are not expected to take their students on trips, they are optional.
- Students may not travel alone or with underage friends while in the U.S. Any absence from school or the host family must be reported and approved by Quest International.
- Students may not have friends/boyfriends/girlfriends or siblings visit during their exchange year. Parents may only visit at the end of the program.
- Unauthorized travel may be cause for dismissal from the program.

If a student's natural family plans to visit, this visit must first be cleared through the Quest International National Office. Visits by natural parents during the student's program may negatively affect the exchange experience for your family and your student.

Natural parents must be prepared to arrange their own accommodations during their stay and not impose on host families. Do NOT let a natural family impose on the host family for accommodations during a visit. Please tell your host family to discuss their accommodation arrangement prior to their arrival.

**Travel outside the country will require re-entry arrangements before leaving and must be approved by the School Official who signed the I-20 document. Failure to comply with travel rules may result in termination from the program.**

## Student Departure

Students must return to home country at the end of the exchange program as scheduled. We recommend the student schedules departure within 5 days of the last day of school. The student will pay costs arising from ticket changes. Quest assumes no responsibility for booking or confirming return reservations for students.

- Students may not remain with host family for an extended amount of time unless the extension has been discussed approved by Quest International.
- Most often student's airline tickets were booked by their parents or an overseas agency. Please check with your student well in advance of departure to ensure that tickets arrangements have been made. Quest International does NOT assume any responsibility for flight schedules or changes; students and natural families must provide details of flight arrangements.

## Return Tickets

Quest International has not booked airline tickets for students and we cannot make changes to return flights. It is advised that you discuss the return dates with your exchange student at least one month prior to departure.

### **Travel Fundraising**

Quest International does not permit fundraising at the local level. Quest Representatives, students and host families are not permitted to “earn money” for trips by holding bake sales or selling candy bars, etc. under the Quest International name. If it is a school or church sponsored trip and the money is being raised for the school or church for the trip, a student or host family may participate on behalf of that sponsor.

### **Local Trips with Students**

Before you plan local trips with the students, please consult the National Office. Any trips involving student payments to any agency or Representative of Quest International must be cleared, in writing, through the National Office. *Insurance liability responsibilities make this imperative.* If you have been working with a Travel Agency, you must also give the National Office the following information:

- Destination
- Dates of departure and return
- Accommodations (name/address of hotel or other accommodations, contact name, and phone number)
- Total cost of trip (include itinerary of planned excursions)
- How much of a deposit (if any) is required and how you plan to handle request for refunds
- What kind of transportation you will use (private car, chartered bus, airline, etc.)



## Orientations

## **Host Family Pre-Arrival Orientation**

Quest International requires that host families are informed and given orientation information prior to student arrival. This meeting will require that you go over the Host Family Handbook with all family members. You do not have to read the entire handbook with them, but covering the most important topics is required (see below). Please make sure the host family has clear understanding of these topics, encourage them to read the handbook. You are encouraged to be creative and use your own style, just be sure to cover all of the points outlined in the following agenda. This orientation must be done prior to student's arrival. It **cannot** be done on the same day as the host family interview, as a host family must first be approved through the Quest National Office. The host family orientation does not need to be conducted in the home, and may be a group orientation with other families if appropriate.

## **Host Family Orientation Agenda**

Put together a packet of the following documents for each host family:

Quest International Host Family Handbook (Host Family Responsibilities Form enclosed)

Host Family House Rules Sheet

Host Family Agreement (signatures will verify that the orientation topics were covered)

Student Rules

All materials can be found online.

## **Introduction**

Introduce yourself, your function and responsibilities as a Quest International Representative. Be sure to let your families know that although you are reimbursed for some expenses, you are largely a volunteer with other commitments. Reinforce your commitment to your families and students, but let them know that they may not always reach you and might have to wait for a call back. Make sure they have the information for using the Quest International Emergency Line as well as your phone number. Be sure to mention that you are responsible for representing all parties involved in the exchange experience, i.e. Student, Host Family, School and Program (Quest International).

## **Host Family Responsibilities**

Please review all host family responsibilities with your families utilizing the Host Family Chapter of information outlined in this manual.

## **Student Arrival**

Explain to the family the importance of keeping in close contact 24 hours prior to student arrival, in case flight information changes. Make sure host families have given a cell phone number to their student in case of missed flights or changes in arrival times.

Help families think ahead of how they want to greet their student at the airport. They may want to prepare a welcome sign, flowers, balloons, etc. Also offer suggestions as to how to help student feel welcome during first few days. This is a good time to read "The First Day at Home" and "Culture Shock" (from host family handbook) with families.

## **Expectations**

Try to prepare families to put off "expectations" and be open to the differences that their student *will* come with.

## **House Rules**

Review the "House Rules Form" with families and have them fill it out with your help. It must be submitted as part of the orientation paperwork. Families must understand that their rules will apply and that the student must conform to their standards, not the other way around (as long as rules are "reasonable").

### **Host Siblings**

Always invite host brothers and sisters ten years or older to your host family orientation. Be sure to have a special discussion for these kids about adjusting to a new family member. Be sure to target their "expectations" of their new brother or sister. Help them to be open to someone *different* than what they are expecting. Also discuss jealousy and options to dealing with these feelings. Encourage communication with their parents and tell them the lines are always open to them if they need to call you for any reason.

### **Culture Shock**

Review the Culture Shock section in this manual, point by point. Spend time educating parents on this matter. It will really help them if they can understand ahead of time that some of their student's behavior will be directly related to dealing with culture shock. Also, it helps if parents understand that this is painfully *normal* for all parties involved and that it will pass if everyone can openly deal with it.

### **Supervision**

Help families understand that this will be a tough adjustment for their student and reinforce the need to be firm and understanding at the same time. Some countries give much more freedom to their youth. Host parents may want to have their student watch the news with them a few times to truly understand the dangers in our community and the need for supervision.

### **Private Arrangements**

This topic is covered in this manual and must be addressed during the orientation. Please be sure to bring this information with you so you can cover the material thoroughly.

### **Religion**

Host families must understand that although we encourage student participation in host family religious practices, we cannot force the student to comply and must **never** try to convert students. Host families may require the student to at least give it a try for a while, but if the student is just not interested, the family **must** respect the student's feelings.

### **Monthly Stipend Payments**

Your families should know that stipends are sent on the last Friday of every month. We ask that you inform your host families of this so that we do not get bombarded with phone calls. The first and last months of hosting are *pro-rated*. Stipends are not to cover rent, mortgage or utilities. Host families may not ask the student for money to cover any household costs. Host families should not borrow or loan money to their students.

### **Phone and Computer**

Students must bring their own phone and/or phone card. Host families are not allowed to sign phone contracts for students. Quest students are given this information prior to departure from their country and should not ask a family to sign a phone contract.

Quest recommends to our foreign partners that all students come with their own computer. Host families are not obligated to let student use their home computer. Please make sure your host families are aware the potential dangers of allowing students to use their computer.

### **Program Rules**

It is very important that you review the Quest International Rules for students. Host families must also understand the agreement that they have entered into with regards to their responsibility in enforcing Quest International rules in their home.

## Quest Newsletter

Host Family newsletters will be sent via email bi-monthly. Please let your host families know to look out for this newsletter via email and encourage them to open it, as it will contain helpful reminders and updates about the exchange experience.

## School

Share with your host families the relationship between Quest International and the school. The school holds the authority to terminate the student's visa and all school policies must be followed by students in order to maintain legal status in the U.S. Students must conduct themselves in a respectful manner and comply with all school regulations; failure to do so may result in termination by the school. Students who are terminated by the school will automatically be terminated by Quest and will be requested to return to their home country immediately.

## Insurance

Make sure that parents understand what is covered and what is excluded, i.e. high-risk sports, bungee-jumping, skydiving, etc. Tell them that Quest International never handles claims and that all correspondence should be sent directly to the claims department as indicated in their insurance documents. Tell them NEVER to pay for medical services, as students should be prepared to pay in advance and collect the reimbursement through the claim process. Students are covered for full Medical and emergency Dental (only covered in case of accidental injury). Host Families may need to help their student file a claim, so please prepare them for this. Not all students will have insurance that was offered by the Quest program. Remind host families that Quest is NOT an insurance provider and will assist with difficulties in claims ONLY if it was insurance that was offered through Quest. The natural family and the student must handle all other insurance claim difficulties.

The medical release document gives the host family permission to authorize treatment, but above all, tell the families NEVER to list their own names and addresses on the paperwork. Be sure they bring the student's home address in their home country with them if the student requires medical attention. This ensures that if the insurance company delays paying a claim, the host family will not be sent to collections over it.

## All Other Information

This agenda may not include all issues you want to cover. Use this manual as a guide. Whatever you do, always have an agenda prepared ahead of time and detail bullet points under each topic that you want to be sure to discuss.

## Student Orientation

We suggest that both student and host family attend this orientation so that everyone's questions are answered and everyone is clear of roles and expectations. Orientations may be held as a group or with individual students if they are not able to attend the group meeting. This meeting must be planned in advance so that all students and host families have the opportunity to attend. If a student/host family is not able to attend, you will need to conduct an individual orientation with them. Appropriate locations are as follows:

- your home (maybe an arranged dinner or picnic)
- library room or church hall
- host family home
- any other location that is permissible without a fee

*Quest encourages group orientations because it offers students the opportunity to meet one another at the beginning of their exchange year. Most area reps choose to have a BBQ or potluck with the family, student and siblings.*

For group meetings, we recommend you encourage each family to bring a snack or a dish to pass. Students will have a much easier time listening to you when they are not hungry. You may encourage them to bring a traditional food item from their home country, or write a short essay about where they are from to present to the group. They will likely have to give presentations at school, which may be an unfamiliar concept to them, so this would be a good opportunity to practice.

Depending on how many students you have and how much time available with the group, you may also include some quick team building and getting to know you games to break up the meeting a little. You will be covering quite a lot of information and you want to keep the participants from losing interest as best you can.

### **Materials to Bring**

Please ask host family to bring the "House Rules Form" you completed with them at their Pre-Arrival Orientation - they may not have it with them so be prepared with extra copies.

Orientation Agenda

Insurance Information

Extra Student Handbooks

Student Rules

Student Orientation Agreements (student and host family must sign this form)

Appropriate Behavior (sexual misconduct guidelines)

Important Numbers For Exchange Student (one for each student)

Paper/pens

We would like you to adhere as closely to this agenda as possible to be sure that your group is fully prepared to have the best year possible. You are encouraged to be creative and use your own style, making sure to cover all of the points outlined in the following agenda.

### **Student Orientation Agenda**

#### **Introduction**

Who is Quest International?

Your Local Rep- Monthly contact, return phone calls from rep.

Quest Regional Rep.

F-1 Program Definitions

#### **Meals**

Self serve breakfast is common. Lunches should be prepared by you the student; lunch purchased in school is the student's financial responsibility. Try to eat family meals together and don't sleep through dinner or weekend breakfasts. Occasionally, you may be expected to prepare your own meal. Be conscious of the food portions you eat. Host families cook for the total number of people eating and you must be considerate of others. Keep your food portions reasonable. When packing a lunch from home, be conscious of the size of your lunch. If you eat a lot, you will have to supplement your lunch with snacks that you must pay for.

#### **Host Family Stipend**

Students think that host families are getting paid to host them and are sometimes rude saying "You are being paid to host me." They are not earning income to host, but rather receiving a monthly stipend to defray the cost of food, electric, water, heat, gas, etc.

#### **Getting to school**

Getting up for school is your responsibility and getting to the bus each day. GO TO BED EARLY.

**Making Plans**

Host families are busy and use calendars to keep track of appointments. It is very important to ask host families for permission to go somewhere and give rides ahead of time. Demanding a ride at the last minute because you decide to wait one month to start a school project is unacceptable. Give details of where, with whom, and when you are going when making plans.

**Report Cards**

It is the responsibility of your Quest Representative to ask you about your grades, because you must maintain "C" in order to stay in program. This also helps host families/ reps to get you more help if necessary, so that you can succeed and help bring your grades up.

**Airline Tickets/Important Documents**

I-20/ Passport/ I-94 form/ Return ticket must be kept in a safe place

**Role of the Host family**

Members of the family and not "guests", HF Responsibilities

**Living Together**

Life and customs in the U.S.

modesty, manners, volunteering to help at home, church/religion, transportation, food, money, telephone, computer use, internet, House Rules, no biological family visits until last month

**Relationships**

It takes effort to build relationships, do not judge or compare with family back home

American families want students to share customs and culture, important to make American friends

Boyfriends/Girlfriends are discouraged

Say "please" and "thank you"

**Student Rules and Standards of Conduct**

Review all the rules one by one - breaking these rules can lead to an early return home

**Financial Responsibilities**

Student costs, monthly stipend is \$350 minimum, laptop, own cell phone, host family will not sign phone contract for you.

You must buy your own shampoo, deodorant, etc. entertainment, meals outside of home, clothing.

Students traveling with their host families should expect to pay their own way. Host families are not responsible for transportation cost.

**Your Community**

Library, School, Getting around

**Discipline**

Warnings and Probation Letters, Host Family Rules, Help, Culture Shock / Homesickness (symptoms and solutions)

**Sexual Abuse Information**

Pass out Appropriate Behavior pamphlet and discuss

**Private Arrangements**

This topic is covered in this manual and must be addressed during the orientation. Please be sure to bring this information with you so you can cover the material thoroughly.

**Medical Insurance**

Insurance card copies and important contact numbers

Students pay co-pay or anything not covered by insurance, never put Host Family address on medical documents - always use natural parent address.

Give a copy of your insurance information to Quest Representative

Report health issues to your host family immediately – do not wait.

**School**

School attendance is required to maintain Visa status

Students are to maintain a “C” average in every class, respect school rules and decisions

There is no guarantee of graduation, class level, or sports participation

**Travel**

Host parents can sign school travel permission slips

Overnight/extended travel with host family (different city, different state, Canada/Mexico) requires Quest and Natural Parent permission

School absences must be approved in advance- no overnight travel without adult supervision allowed



## CSIET Regulations

## **CSIET**

These rules and regulations that govern exchange organizations were created by the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET).

### **CSIET Standards for International Educational Travel Programs**

CSIET (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel) is a not-for-profit organization committed to quality international educational travel and exchange. It establishes “standards” for organizations operating such programs at the high school level and monitors these organizations for compliance with those “standards” and also disseminates information regarding these organizations.

#### **Program**

A program is defined as an organized international educational travel activity that begins with participant recruitment and selection, including the components outlined in the standards that follow. It terminates when the participant returns to his or her point of origin or otherwise severs the relationship with the program sponsor.

#### **Standard 1: Educational Perspective**

- A. Programs shall be designed to fulfill educational purposes related to an international experience.
- B. The organization sponsoring the program shall have clearly established goals and learning objectives to fulfill the educational purposes of its programs.

#### **Standard 2: Organizational Profile**

- A. The structure and administration of the organization shall be clearly defined.
- B. The organization shall have personnel needed to administer its programs effectively. *An organization shall have direct, hands-on control of the placement and supervision of inbound students and the hiring, firing, and remuneration of Quest Representatives. Such an organization may not enter into a relationship with another entity that appears to exercise such control.*
- C. The organization shall be organized under the laws of one of the 50 states of the United States or the District of Columbia.
- D. The organization shall demonstrate success in international educational travel through at least one full school year since its incorporation.

#### **Standard 3: Financial Responsibility**

- A. The organization shall be capable of discharging its financial responsibilities to all participants.
- B. The organization shall have sufficient financial backing to protect all monies paid by participants and to ensure fulfillment of all responsibilities to participants.
- C. The organization shall have an independent Certified Public Accountant annually prepare an audited or review Financial Statement.

#### **Standard 4: Promotion**

- A. The organization shall accurately represent its purposes, activities, and sponsorship in all promotional materials/activities in a professional and ethical manner.
- B. The organization shall not publicize the need for host families via the public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc., that:
  - are not sufficiently advertised in advance of the student's arrival
  - appeal to public pity or guilt
  - imply in any way that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately
  - identify photos of individual students and include an appeal for an immediate family.
- C. All promotional materials/activities shall distinguish the program and the sponsoring organization from others operating under:
  - affiliated or related corporate structures
  - the same or similar names or symbols

- D. The organization shall fully disclose all fees, including school tuition, host family reimbursements, and other required or optional costs to prospective students and their natural families before enrollment.
- E. Neither the organization or its agents shall promote its programs as providing opportunities for school athletic participation, high school graduation, driver's education instruction, household domestic service, child care, employment, or other activities that might compromise the student program, or school.
- F. The organization shall not state or imply in its promotional materials/activities that persons who are compensated other than out-of-pocket expenses are volunteers.

#### **Standard 5: Student Selection and Orientation**

- A. The organization shall carefully screen and select student participants on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.
- B. Screening procedures for home-stay programs shall include personal interviews with student applicants.
- C. Selection shall be completed sufficiently in advance of the student's departure to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation.
- D. Students shall be given a suitable orientation before departure and after arrival in the host country.
- E. All inbound students attending a U.S. High School must have adequate English language proficiency to function successfully.
- F. All inbound and outbound students attending school must have adequate academic preparation to function successfully.

#### **Standard 6: Student Placement**

- A. For programs that include a home-stay, the organization shall:
  - Select host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
  - Personally interview all prospective host families in their home
  - Match students and host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
  - Complete placement arrangements sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from home to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation of the host family
  - Provide suitable orientation and training to the host family
- B. For programs that include accommodations other than home-stay, the organization shall:
  - Arrange accommodations on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
  - Ensure the adequacy of the accommodations with respect to location, cleanliness, safety, nutrition, and supervision
  - Confirm the accommodations sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from home.
- C. For programs that include attendance at a U.S. high school, the organization shall:
  - Secure written acceptance from the school principal or other designated responsible school administrator prior to confirming assignment of the student to a host family.
  - Provide the school with the following information about the student:
    - Academic history, including academic records, translated into English, number of years of school completed prior to arrival, and number of years required in home country for the completion of secondary schools
    - Level of English language proficiency
    - Appropriate background information
    - Expectations regarding school experience.

#### **Standard 7: Operations**

- A. The organization shall ensure adequate care and supervision of students. An organization shall have direct hands-on control of the placement and supervision of inbound students and the hiring, firing, and remuneration of Quest Representatives. Such an organization may not enter into a relationship with another entity that appears to exercise such control.
- B. Regular personal contact shall be maintained by local representatives of the organization.

- C. The organization shall notify the student, host family, and/or other supervisor of accommodations regarding travel itinerary, sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from the home country.
- D. The organization shall provide adequate support services at the local level to assist with program-related needs and problems. (For example, counseling services, travel, medical care, language problems, changes in host family, emergencies.)
- E. The organization shall maintain an effective system of screening, selecting, training, and supervising program representatives and group leaders.
- F. The organization shall provide both outbound and inbound students with an identification card that includes the student's host name; the host family's name, address, and telephone; the local representative's name, address, and telephone; the address and telephone of the organization's appropriate national office.
- G. The organization shall maintain thorough, accurate, and continual communication with host families and school authorities.
- H. The organization shall provide the opportunity to the student, host family, and school to participate in a post-exchange evaluation.
- I. The organization shall have in place adequate plans for dealing with emergency situations that may arise during the program.

**Standard 8: Student Insurance**

- A. The organization shall guarantee that every student is covered with adequate health and accident insurance. Such insurance shall:
  - Protect students for the duration of their program.
  - Provide for the return of the students to his/her home in the event of serious illness, accident, or death during the program.
- B. The organization shall provide students, host families, and appropriate supervisor(s) with detailed printed information regarding the terms and limits of insurance coverage and procedures for filing a claim.
- C. Compensated officials and employees of the organization shall not receive compensation from the sale of insurance to its participants.

**Standard 9: Adherence to Government Regulations**

- A. The organization shall comply with all appropriate government regulations regarding international exchange or any other activity under its auspices.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the organization to notify the Council of any change in status with respect to government designation, acknowledgement, acceptance, and/or endorsement.

## Representative Training Confirmation

Representative Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby confirm that I have read and understand the F-1 School Programs Training Manual.

I have addressed any questions with the Quest National Office and feel confident

I can perform the responsibilities outlined in this manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Sign and send back to the Quest International Office)