

## Host Family Pre-Arrival Orientation



Association for Teen-Age  
Diplomats

7:00	Host Families Arrive
7:00-7:10	Welcome/Introductions
7:10-7:30	Getting to Know Each Other
7:30-8:00	Thanks for Taking an International Student Into Your Home
8:00-8:20	Culture
8:20-8:45	My Child or Not My Child
8:45-9:00	Open Discussion
9:00-9:15	Staff Evaluation
9:15	Staff Leaves

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

Put key phrases on the wall - flip charts and magic markers will be provided. Leave critical pages on the wall throughout the orientation. Copies of all handouts referenced in this orientation material will be provided for the Host Families. The orientation leader should reference the *"Pre-Arrival Orientation Coordinator"* policy for additional materials from the ATAD Policies and Procedures Notebook which should be made available to the Host Families.

Please take attendance of the group to be sure all host families receive the necessary orientation and materials.

## **7:00-7:10 Welcome / Introductions**

PURPOSE: To introduce the ATAD staff and purpose of the orientation. Use a large poster with the ATAD organization structure to explain the organization to the host families.

- I. The welcome will be presented by the President of ATAD or the Vice-President for Host Families. Introduce all ATAD staff who is at the orientation. Thank the host families for attending. Let them know this will be an informal, open discussion, to give them an opportunity to have any questions they have answered.
- II. Review the structure of ATAD. Reinforce the longevity of its history and that it is an all volunteer organization. Explain private versus "recognized" exchange student and program. This often gets confusing for everyone.
- III. Tell the host families that if they raise a question which will be addressed later in the orientation, it will be written on a flip chart to assure it will be answered to their satisfaction later.

## **7:10-7:30 Getting to Know Each Other**

PURPOSE: To help host families get to know their new son or daughter before they arrive, and to help him or her adjust during their first few days in the United States.

The following should be handed out to each host family:

*"Getting to Know Each Other"*

*"How Do You Do Things In Your Home"*

- I. Hand out *"Getting to Know Each Other"* and review.
- II. Hand out *"How Do You Do Things In Your Home?"*

This is a good reference for parents to look through the first few weeks to be sure they have covered all important topics with their exchange student about how their household works.

# Getting to Know Each Other



## Association for Teen-Age Diplomats

### I. Pre-Arrival

Exchange letters and photos with the student and his or her parents. Include information about family activities, where relatives live and when you see them, the most important family values and rules, and other ideas that describe your life. Small child can draw a picture of the house and label each of the rooms, including where the Exchange Student will stay.

Get the student's room ready. Are they going to have their own room or are they going to share? Has enough closet and drawer space been cleared for the student?

Collect materials that will be useful to your Exchange Student: school handbook, local maps, bus schedule, town and city informational brochures.

Discuss with the family how things will be different with one more person in the family.

Inform yourself about your exchange student's home country:

geographical location, bordering countries, climate

history: how old, how settled

major religions, holidays

languages

type of government, name of current head of government

Learn to say a few phrases in your student's language:

Hello. Good morning. Good night.

How are you? I am fine.

Thank you. You're welcome.

### II. Arrival - Call the airlines 1 hour before the expected arrival time to make sure the flight is on time. Be at the airport 15-30 minutes before the scheduled flight arrival time.

Have a sign with the student's name on it so your student can find you at the airport. Flowers are always appreciated by female students from foreign countries.

### III. Coming Home

Remember above all your student will be exhausted! Show your student their room and the bathroom. Show them how to use the toilet and shower, and where to find the towels. Briefly show them around the rest of the house. After that, play it by ear. Regardless of time, tell them to contact their natural parents now to let them know that they arrived safely. Contact method should be phone or some other type of voice communication such as Skype; e-mail is

not acceptable. Offer them something light to eat, but don't make it heavy or spicy. Remember that their body needs to get adjusted to this new time and new style of food.

Go to work the next day. This will give them a chance to sleep in without feeling like they have to get up to be with the family. Tell them to look through the cupboards and closets in the house to get to know where everything is. If a room is "off limits" as the parent's bedroom, let them know that. By being alone, they will feel more comfortable to look around and "get a feel for the land".

#### IV. The Next Few Days

The next few days will be spent getting to know each other.

- a. Now is the time to show them around the house in more detail and to give them a key. Explain the security system if you have one.
- b. Talk slowly and do not use "big" words. Your student will struggle with the language for several weeks. They will feel more comfortable if you make an effort to help them understand you, rather than their having to frequently ask you to repeat what you say.
- c. If you have pets, discuss if they are allowed to go outside or not, and any other restrictions/expectations with the pets.
- d. Mark important dates on the calendar like the student's birthday and important holidays.
- e. Discuss some of your family rules. Will the student have a curfew? Are they expected to share in the household chores? (It is **strongly** recommended that your new son or daughter have at least one responsibility around the house - wash the dishes, set the table, clean the sinks, dust the family room. In this way the exchange student will feel a responsible member of the family.) Do they need to ask permission before they go somewhere, or is a note sufficient? When are family meal times and what are the expectations?
- f. Above all, be open with your student. We cannot stress **communication** enough! Remember that your children are used to everyday life at your house, but your student needs to learn how you live. Don't hesitate to ask your student questions.
- g. For parents, what does your student feel comfortable calling you? It is important within the first week for you and your student to establish how to address each other.
- h. Is your student on any medication? Do they have any food dislikes or allergies?

You get the picture. Just do what is natural and the rest will fall in place.

# How Do You Do Things In Your Home?



## Association for Teen-Age Diplomats

Congratulations on your new son or daughter. The year ahead will be filled with challenges and rewards. We thought it would be helpful to know some of the topics that host families and exchange students encounter in their daily routine, and in the process of becoming a family unit. We recommend that you consider the topics below, and have a family meeting, complete with your own children and your exchange student, to discuss your family rules and routines soon after your exchange student arrives. **DO NOT** hold this meeting the first or second day after your student arrives. They will still be struggling with language and time adjustment. They must be able to get their feet on solid ground before they will comprehend the conversation. On the other hand, do not wait more than 3 weeks to have this discussion. Otherwise, patterns and emotions may become too set in their ways to be open to as frank a discussion that needs to occur about the expectations of the family. **The most important thing is for everyone to talk about expectations so there are common understandings.**

### **Food**

When are meals? Is everyone expected to be there?  
Are breakfast and lunch on their own, or are they family meals?  
Show your student how to use the microwave.  
Is snacking allowed: anything you want or just specified food (ex. leftovers)?  
Is there a limit on the amount of a food or beverage one can have?  
Can you eat in the living room? Bedroom?  
Does student have any food dislikes or allergies?

### **Table Behaviors**

Is it important that your student eat "American style"?  
Is it important that everyone eat basically the same thing (same menu) at the table? Does everyone need to try every food on the table?  
When are meals? Is everyone expected to eat together?  
Teach your student how to use all of the appliances in the kitchen.

### **Dishes**

Who does the dishes, loads the dishwasher (how do you want that done), unloads the dishwasher, dries the dishes?  
Are dirty dishes washed immediately, left on the counter, left in the sink?

### **Communication Methods (Telephone, Cell Phone, Internet)**

What are your limits for communication time in the house?

When can calls come into the house?  
Are there limits on the time (on the phone, on the internet ("screen time"), etc.)?  
Who pays for telephone or cell phone calls?  
What are expectations around sharing with other family members?  
Explain the use of the answering machine and call waiting.  
What are your rules on texting?

### **At Home Entertainment (TV, Computer/Internet, iPods, Stereo, etc)**

What are expectations around sharing with other family members?  
Are there limits on screen time (number of hours, after homework, on weekends, etc.)?  
What is the tolerable noise level?  
Who decides which program to watch?  
Is there a computer/TV/noise curfew?  
Can you change the TV channel if someone is sleeping in front of the TV?

### **Pets**

Is the dog/cat allowed inside/outside?  
May the dog/cat sleep on the furniture or bed?  
May the dog eat table scraps? Can it eat off the dishes?

### **Bathroom**

Who uses which bathroom?  
What is the schedule?

Who gets priority?  
How long is too long, especially for showers?  
Do you have limited water pressure, water supply, hot water?  
Do you expect everyone to shower daily?  
Should the toilet seat and cover be left up or down?  
Should the door be left open or closed?  
Should the soap dish or sink be dried?  
Should the shower curtain be left open or closed?  
Should the shower door be wiped down?  
Who can use whose soap, shampoo, hair dryer, etc?  
Who buys the toiletries?  
Where should wet towels be put: hung up, in laundry?  
How often are towels replaced?  
Where are individual's towels kept?\_

### **Bedroom**

Should the door be left open or shut: when you aren't in the room, in the room studying, asleep?  
Do you knock before entering or just open the door?  
Does the bed have to be made every day, never, or only on special occasions?  
Are clothes to be: put away, left on the chair or bed, left on the floor?  
Who is responsible for cleaning the bedroom?  
Is the student allowed to hang things on the wall with tacks, tape, other?  
If the student is sharing a bedroom, what are the expectations of both sibling and International Student relative to lights, music, window open/closed, when to get up or go to bed, how to study and where?  
Are friends allowed in the bedroom? Friends of the opposite sex? With door open or closed?\_

### **Laundry**

Where should the laundry be left: hamper, bathroom, laundry chute, bedroom floor?  
Does everyone do their own laundry, or is this one person's responsibility?  
How often are sheets changed? Who does it?  
Where are clean sheets and towels kept?

### **Living Room**

Who uses the living room? For what activities: watching TV, studying, sleeping, eating, talking?  
Can you put feet on the furniture?  
Do coasters need to be used for drinks?

### **Family Expectations**

What family activities is your student expected to participate in?  
Is there a curfew?  
Does one have to ask permission before going somewhere or is a note sufficient?  
What are the house rules? What are the consequences?  
If there are small children, are there any special rules/expectations with them?  
Are there assigned household chores? Weekly, daily, rotating, etc?  
Does the family attend church together? Every week or only on certain occasions? What clothes required?  
Does your student want to attend your church, a different church, no religious services?  
Who brings in the mail? Who pays for stamps?  
Is smoking allowed in the house, in certain rooms, outside, not at all?

### **Odds and Ends**

Should shoes be taken off in the house?  
Where should studying be done? In the living room, bedroom, kitchen?  
Are doors shut, opened, locked, unlocked?  
Should lights be left on or off when not in a room? Are there night lights or certain lights left on at night?  
Are windows left open or closed in the summer/winter?  
Where are wet clothes, shoes, animals placed?  
Is student on any medication? What are the student's needs/expectations from the Host Family relative to the medication?  
Is gift giving important/expected? If so, remember home made gifts from a student on a budget are as valuable as purchased gifts. Is a card or hug all that is expected?  
Explain for which occasions gifts are exchanged.

## **7:30-8:00 Thanks for Taking an International Student Into Your Home**

PURPOSE: To help you help your International Student learn and adjust to the home, community, and school.

### **I. Family and Home**

Accept your student as your own. Observe the same rules, responsibilities, privileges, discipline, and concern you share for your own family and children. Be fair with your student and your children. Sibling rivalry can occur, so don't center everything around your student. Don't be afraid to change the rules as situations change or new issues arise. Everyone needs to adapt to the new style of the family.

### **II. ATAD**

ATAD is here to help everyone have a positive experience. Each ATAD program has a designated ATAD program chair for students and their host families. We want to share the good times with you and your international student, and also be available to help whenever needed. You should be aware that the federal government guidelines require exchange programs to interact with international students and host families at least monthly, and schools on a periodic basis.

### **II. School**

Call your school ASAP to make arrangements to get your student enrolled in classes. ATAD has already received clearance for your student to attend the school, but he or she must still choose their classes and schedule. Try to get a brochure of the classes offered so you and your student can study the courses available before talking with the guidance counselor. Also get a copy of the school handbook and review with your student to help him/her understand the rules in the United States; these may be different than the rules in their home country.

Each ATAD exchange student is required to take American History, English Literature, and Physical Education. Public Speaking may be a good course to consider for the second semester. No student under any circumstances may take Driver's Education. After that, the course schedule is up to you, your student, and the school. But remember to enter them into a full course of study that will be challenging based on their previous academics. This is not a vacation or an easy ride. Many students complain about the easy American school system because they have not been enrolled in challenging enough courses.

Make sure you know if your student is trying to receive school credit for the year; it will make a difference in some classes may need to be taken. Students can not receive graduation diplomas because of the requirements of New York State. However, if your student will be registered as a senior, it is likely they can go through graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance.

Have someone show your student around the school so they are not lost the first day. They have enough anxiety already, and the school is probably much bigger than they are used to back home. Visit the classrooms, library, gym and cafeteria. Show them their locker, and have them open the lock several times to learn how to use the combination. Try to meet some of the faculty or athletic coaches. Explain the bus system to your student. Talk to the school counselor about assigning a mentor for your student, someone from the Student Council, UN club, language club, etc. Have the mentor escort your student to classes the first few days, and eat lunch with him/her.

The student must attend all classes, unless excused by their host parents and the school. The student is expected to make up all school work which they miss during an absence. This may be different than what they are used to at home where students go to school based on their own initiative. Explain to your student that teachers are to be shown respect. Teachers are addressed as Mr., Mrs., or Ms., never by their first name. But teachers are also friendly and easy to talk to about academics and school adjustment. Teachers will tend to give extra time and effort to International Students; in turn, the International Student should demonstrate respect and appreciation for this help.

Encourage your student to become involved in extracurricular activities: sports, clubs, student government. Have them participate in Homecoming, go to sports games, and attend school plays or concerts. The more activities the student is involved with, the more successful will be the experience. If the student is enrolled in sports, explain the policy of team cuts, daily practice, and team rules. Your student is also encouraged to speak at community groups once their English is good enough. This may include speaking to school groups, to language classes, during International Week, etc. It is important for each exchange student to make a visible contribution to both school and community.

### III. Money

Help your student open a bank account if appropriate. They do not have to have a social security number to open an account, as some banks may lead you to believe. There is a special IRS form available at the bank which can be filled in to exempt exchange students from having to have a social security number.

Help your student plan a realistic budget and plan ahead for holidays, school trips, and the entire year's budget. Help him or her understand about the cost of items and what is a "good buy". What will the student be expected to pay for? If the family does an activity together, it is recommended that the parents pay for their student, as a movie, museum admission, etc. But if the student does something on their own, it is not unreasonable to expect them to pay for their own costs.

If you feel the amount of money your student is spending is excessive, do not hesitate to talk to him or her about their spending habits. Discuss what his or her natural parent's expectations are for the amount of money that they should be spending. If you still feel



uncomfortable about the student's spending habits after this discussion, do not hesitate to discuss the issue with your Program Chair. If your student plans to make a major purchase (items like cameras and laptop computers can cost significantly less money in the US than in some foreign countries), discuss this with your student prior to the purchase, and make sure his or her natural parents are aware of and agree to the planned purchase. You as a Host Parent are in no way obligated to assist the student in such purchases, and the student is fully responsible for any issues that might arise with importing a major item into his or her home country.

#### IV. Community

Help your student learn about the cost of living, prices, driving distances, and the community. Take him or her with you when you go to the post office, bank, library, grocery store, shopping, etc. We are proud of Monroe County and Upstate New York. There are a lot of things to share with your student. Consider trips to our museums, parks, shopping malls, Erie Canal, Lake Ontario, Letchworth and Stoneybrook Parks, Niagara Falls, etc. Participate in town events as holiday parades, Canal Days, Lilac Festival, concerts, and Downtown Rochester events.

#### V. Activities

Help your student understand and use the family calendar. Does your student need to consult with the family before planning an activity or event? Help your student plan ahead for activities which require transportation. Suggest car pools. Is a parent available to transport the student at the last minute? It is OK to say no, and to disallow certain unacceptable drivers and/or activities. Is use of public transportation an option? If so, obtain a bus schedule for your student and help him or her understand it, including costs.

The International Student is a member of your family for this year, and is expected to be with the family on special says, e.g. Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthday Mother's Day, Father's Day, other special family occasions.

ATAD will sponsor several activities for you and your student, a few of which are required.

- a. Welcome picnic in August for student and host families.
- b. REQUIRED Post-Arrival orientation in early October for student and host parents (sibling attendance is optional but encouraged).
- c. Meeting with the Mayor or Rochester.
- d. Winter Dinner for student and families in February.
- e. REQUIRED Re-Entry orientation in June for students and host parents.

For all ATAD sponsored activities, the student and/or parents will receive a flier explaining the details of the activity. Encourage your student to share all information with you, and mark it on your calendar. Other International Students may have "ATAD" parties in their homes, but these are only at the option of the host families, and are not sponsored by ATAD. It is encouraged that host siblings and American friends be invited to such parties. The International Students are here to learn about the American culture, not to isolate themselves among the other exchange students.

Parents should assure that their student promptly responds to all RSVPs, and writes thank you notes when appropriate.

#### VI. Passport, Visa

Look over your student's important papers carefully. Check the dates. Make a copy and put it in a safe place. Make sure you know where your student keeps these documents. Check if the visa stamp says "Multiple Entry". If it does not, a special visa will be required if the student leaves the country, for example to visit Niagara Falls or Toronto. It is suggested that if you plan to go into Canada that you have the ATAD US Department of State Responsible Officer sign your student's DS-2019 Form prior to departure stating that the student is in good standing.

#### VII. Provide families with copies of the *"International Student Directory"* if available.

This has the names, addresses, and phone numbers of other International Students and their Host Families in the Monroe County area. This will be useful to parents if arranging transportation to ATAD sponsored events, and in getting to know other students and host parents in the program.

## 8:00-8:20 Culture

PURPOSE: To help parents understand what are cultural differences, and to not judge their student or their culture. Also, to explain culture shock and what parents can do to help.

Handouts of “Culturegrams” specific to each country the exchange students come from are to be available for each family.

I. The leader introduces this session by saying something like:

*It is natural for all of us to believe that the way we behave is normal, and is the way everyone acts. All people think this way until they have, the opportunity to live with others whose way of behaving is different from their own. It is through this contact with people of other cultures that we learn about the world. In this session we will learn how to look at cultural differences in a non-judgmental way, and what adjustments are needed for the family and student to live together.*

II. The leader then begins with a definition of culture:

*Many people who travel abroad take a camera and take lots of pictures. They return with photographs of cathedrals, castles, people in bright costumes, and quaint village streets. Unfortunately, many of these people think they have photographed the culture of the lands they have visited. This could not be. One cannot photograph a culture because culture is not the physical things. What we see with our camera are reflections of culture or products of culture.*

Write down the following definition of culture:

Culture is the attitude, beliefs, values, ideas and assumptions that a group of people hold in common.

Many of our attitudes, values and beliefs are so taken for granted by most of us that we accept them as being givens of all mankind. We may assume that all people are created equal, that hard work and competition is good, that change and improvements should be sought, that it is not good to "waste time". There are hundreds of such ideas that we may have, but these are distinctly American values, and often do not apply to other cultures.

It is important to keep an open mind when dealing with your exchange student. Do not judge or place value judgment on their behaviors or beliefs. Try to understand them, and help them to adjust to "appropriate" American behavior. Use this opportunity to learn more about your own values and beliefs.

Hand out the “Culturegram” to each family that is specific to the country their exchange student is from. Encourage the family to read the Culturegram to get a better understanding of their student’s values and beliefs. Suggest that each family learn as much about their student’s country

and culture as they can prior to their student's arrival. Let the families know they can also talk to their Program Chair at any time prior to or after their student's arrival if they have any questions or to obtain more information.

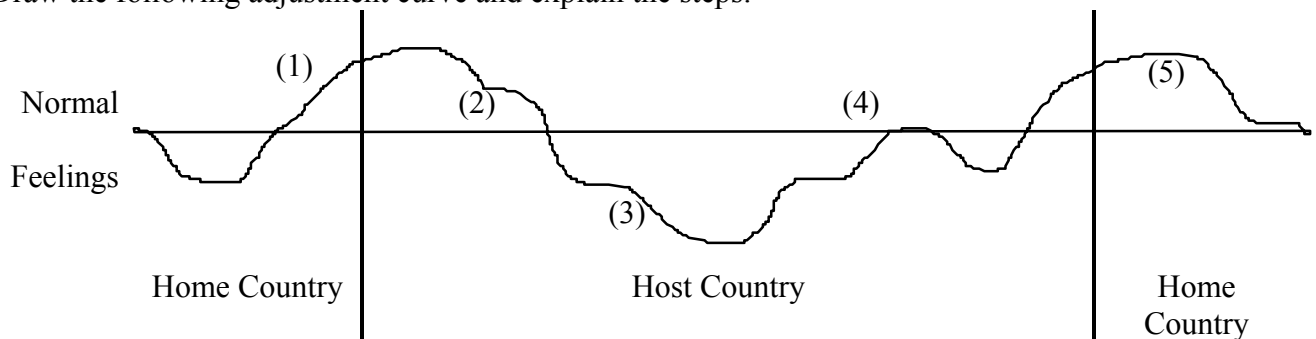
Suggest the following steps to follow if an undesirable situation arises:

1. First identify your own values. Why do you see the situation or behavior the way you do? Think of your own behavior and reaction, and why you behave or think that way.
2. Try to understand the student's point of view. Why do they say what they say or act the way they do? If you don't understand, ask questions.
3. See what kind of adaptation is necessary. When we say adapt, we are changing behaviors, not values.

III. Explain:

*A lot is expected of the students. With all that is new and different, there is usually an uneven curve of adjustment, with some points where the student may be very unhappy or uncomfortable.*

Draw the following adjustment curve and explain the steps.



The adjustment process typically consists of several phases throughout the exchange experience:

1. The student is excited with departure from home country and arrival in host country, and all the new discoveries of the first weeks.
2. As the student becomes more accustomed to the new life, emotions become more normal.
3. Students may experience depression at some point, after life has become routine, if they are not adjusting well to their new family or culture, or often around holidays. This is when students begin to think a lot about "home" and old friends.
4. Student has adapted and now feels fully "at home" in the host country, going through the normal small ups and downs of daily life.
5. During the end of the school year and the end of the stay there is a lot of excitement with school activities and parties, as well as the excitement of the anticipation of returning home to see one's family and friends again.

Return to talk more about (3), explaining that this phase of the student's emotions is referred to as "culture shock". Culture shock is a very real physical and emotional reaction to suddenly finding yourself in a culture completely different from your own. It is a time when the student is overloaded with the new things he or she must know and do in the new culture. It is a time when the lack of a familiar support system, such as the natural family and friends, can cause feelings of loneliness and isolation. All of us feel some "lows" and sadness at some times, but when students begin to suffer from culture shock, it is very important that they quickly understand their emotions and how to respond to them. The following are some signs of culture shock:

1. Getting annoyed at host family rules, expectations, behaviors.
2. Spending too much time engaging with their home country rather than their host country.
3. Isolating themselves after the initial week or two, lacking self confidence, forgetful.
4. Unexpected over reaction to situations, compulsive behavior.
5. A lot of time spent thinking about natural family and friends, homesickness.
6. Comparing things and events to those in home country, thinking everything is better at "home".
7. Physical problems: stomach aches, headaches, nervousness, tension, lack of energy.

There is a tremendous need for students and host families to talk and share their feelings during these times. To overcome the depression these situations can cause, the student needs to recognize and understand what is causing the bad feelings. If not, the reaction is likely to be anger and a lack of communication. The following are some things the host family can encourage their student to do:

1. Go out, get involved, do things - don't stay in your room or over sleep.
2. Don't spend hours communicating with family and friends at home.
3. Accept feelings as being normal, and work to overcome them.
4. Join a club or activity.
5. Talk to your Host Family and Program Chair.
6. Take one day at a time. Think things out.
7. Set small goals that you can accomplish by yourself as: how to travel on your own, how to say a new phrase, identify one new person whom you are going to say "Hi" to.
8. Ask your family for help to accomplish goals; the whole family can benefit by working out of the depression of culture shock.

Reinforce to the parents the importance of knowing, understanding, and dealing with culture shock. This concept will be discussed again during the Post-Arrival Orientation in October after the students have been here a while and begun to adjust (or not adjust) to their new home and surroundings.

IV. Summarize the session with statements as:

*We have talked this session about how to be successful with two different cultures living together. Both students and host families need to be aware of the other's adjustments and needs. By trying to learn why we all act and think as we do, we will learn from each other and be able to understand the other's ideas and ideals. Empathy for the other culture's points of view may be the most important learning possible in the world today - and we are all a part of it!*

## 8:20-8:45 My Child or Not My Child

PURPOSE: To help parents understand their roles and responsibilities with their new son or daughter, and limitations of expectations. The following have been included to hand out to the Host Families:

*“Responsibilities Versus Considerations”*

*“International Student Parent/Student Agreement”* ISF2 in P&P Notebook

*“International Student Permission to Travel Form”* ISF6 in P&P Notebook

*“ATAD Policies for Emergency Situations”* P3 in P&P Notebook

*“ATAD Contacts”* on website in the Orientation section of the Policies and Procedures

- I. It is important that the host family treat their student like one of the family, not a guest. Families should be themselves, and not treat their new son or daughter any differently than the other children. International Students want to be accepted as members of the American family, and sometimes this may mean reprimand, discipline, or yelling, as well as hugs and loving.

Here are some "gray" areas to think about. Hand out *“Responsibilities Versus Considerations”* and discuss.

- II. Hand out *“International Student Parent/Student Agreement”*. Discuss the rules under *“Student’s Acceptance of Responsibility,”* and the reasons for each expectation if not clear. Include the following points of discussion:

**Immunizations:** If your student needs immunizations, they must receive them before enrolling in school. The Monroe County Health Department will normally administer such inoculations free of charge.

**Medical Insurance:** ATAD has secured medical insurance for each International Student. Make sure you know where your student keeps the insurance card in case of an emergency. Even though the International Student has medical insurance, we ask that the Host Family should check with their insurance company to see if they can include their International Student under their current family medical insurance at no additional charge. If you can, we ask that you make such arrangements when you know your student's arrival date. It is always nice to have this additional coverage.

The student's Parent/Student Agreement included in their application contains a "permission to treat" clause in case of an emergency. Keep these papers in a safe place.

**Student Travel:** Anytime the student or family will be away from home for more than 24 hours, they need to contact their Program Chair with information on how they can be contacted in case of an emergency. The *“International Student Permission to Travel Form”* is used for this purpose.

**Communication:** A student who frequently communicates with home has one foot in their home country and one foot in their host country, and cannot make the break needed to bond

with their host family and adjust. One objective of an exchange program is to learn independence from the home family and to live as a member of a host family. If the student communicates with home too frequently, s/he will likely over-rely on their home parents for advice, guidance and support, which should be happening with their host family.

**Visits from Home Family and Friends:** Such visits are strongly discouraged especially early in the stay, during holidays when the adjustment process is most delicate, and at the end of the stay when the student and family need time to "say good-bye" together. If your student's family or friends want to visit and you do not feel comfortable with the situation, speak up. ATAD respects and supports your feelings and opinions.

- III. There are times when the assistance of the ATAD Program Chair or another Board Member is essential. Hand out "*ATAD Policies for Emergency Situations*" and discuss the highlights with the parents.

Hand out "*ATAD Contacts*". Reinforce that the first point of contact should always be the Program Chair since this person is most familiar with the family and the exchange student's culture. Reinforce to the parents the wide array of support that is available to them in case of any type of emergency.

# Responsibilities Versus Considerations



## Association for Teen-Age Diplomats

### Host Parents' Responsibilities

*(May be the same for natural children.)*

Provide study area, bed, and meals (to include school lunch if not provided by the school, meals at home, and dining out with the family).

As a unit the family shares ideas and values in their daily routine.

The parents set limits and share family exchange expectations. They verbalize family rules to all of their children. When problems arise, they deal with them as a family.

Regarding school, the parents set expectations for school work and grades.

Church attendance is a family decision.

Violations of school or family rules are handled by you as a family.

### For Host Parents' Consideration

Toiletries, telephone and cell phone charges, wardrobe, and cost of social activities are the student's responsibility, but host parents may help if they wish. (If host parents insist on the student having a cell phone, the host family should pay.)

Coming from a different culture, the exchange student may have different values. The student needs to abide by the rules of the family, but not the values (i.e. they need not accept the values but must respect them).

If problems arise in the family involving the student, the family is encouraged to share with, and ask for advice from, the Program Chair. Support services are available. It is important to deal with problems when they are small, before they get too big to be corrected.

ATAD exchange students are expected to participate in class, do all homework, take all tests, and maintain at least a "C" average.

ATAD exchange students make their own decisions regarding church attendance. That is one issue we cannot control.

Exchange student violation of the law or ATAD Rules and Regulations will be handled by ATAD and the Program Chair, with your input.



## **8:45-9:00 Open Discussion**

PURPOSE: To allow the host families an opportunity to ask any questions they may still have, or express any concerns.

- I. Ask if anyone has any questions, or would like to offer any advice from previous experiences they may have had.
- II. Thank the parents for their attendance and attention. Reinforce that ATAD staff is here to help each of them, their children, and their exchange student. Tell the parents that their will be another orientation on a Sunday in early October, which will be required for both students and families. Typically the students will be there from 9:00-5:00 and the families from 2:00-5:00. More details will be sent as soon as the exact date and times are established. This orientation is held after the students have had some time to adjust to their new family, school and country, at a time when they may begin to feel the pressures of the adjustment. It is also held after the "honeymoon" is over when small issues may begin to surface relative to the adjustment of everyone in the family.

**Thank you, and we wish everyone a most successful and exciting year!**

## **9:00-9:15 Staff Evaluation**

The staff should use this opportunity to discuss how the orientation went, and make notes for improvements for the next year.

Thank you for your help!!!