

ATAD Policies - Rules for American Students Going Overseas



Association for Teen-Age
Diplomats

Alcohol: Students are expected to observe national laws and Host Family guidelines with regard to the use of alcohol. Students should not use alcohol in a manner which is excessive, inappropriate, or embarrassing to the Host Family or ATAD. Inappropriate use of alcohol may lead to dismissal from program.

Communications Home: Use of the telephone for long distance calls or E-mail for “chatting” is discouraged. Students are encouraged to write letters to family and friends in the United States. Frequent telephone or E-mail conversations with natural family and home country friends may cause difficulties in the student’s adjustment to the Host Family and school. Lack of adjustment may be cause for dismissal from the program. Before placing a long distance telephone call, the student should ask permission of the host parents. ATAD students should also understand that when they conduct conversations in English, it may cause distrust or discomfort in the Host Family.

Dangerous Activities: Some activities are considered too dangerous for ATAD students and are not permitted. Examples are hang gliding, hitchhiking, parachute jumping, piloting a private plane, bungee jumping, driving a car, motorcycle or an all terrain vehicle (ATV).

There are other activities judged to involve some danger (hunting, snowmobiling, scuba diving, mountain climbing, travel in private plane, white water rafting) or some medical risk (body piercing, tattoos). For these activities and any for which you are uncertain, first consult the ATAD Program Liaison in the host country. Prior written permission must be given by the natural parents and by the ATAD Program Liaison in the host country for the student to participate in such activities. This permission must release the Association for Teen-Age Diplomats and the Host Family from all responsibility during the time the student is engaged in that activity.

For participation in any activity, the student must follow all laws and practice reasonable safety precautions. Furthermore it is the sole responsibility of the student and natural parents to ascertain whether the activity is covered under their current insurance policy, and to obtain additional insurance as necessary.

Drugs: ATAD students may not buy, sell, possess or use drugs that are illegal. Violators of this policy will be considered for dismissal from the program. If the student is arrested for a drug related incident, please refer to the section on Violations of the Law.

Driving: ATAD students are not permitted to drive any car for any reason while overseas, even if they possess an international driver’s license. Violators of this policy will be considered for dismissal from the program.

Employment: Participants in the ATAD program are not permitted to take full-time employment during their stay overseas. However, they may hold informal part-time jobs such as baby sitting, lawn work, etc., as long it does not interfere with school or Host Family obligations.

Extension of Stay: All students will travel to and from their Host Family as arranged by ATAD. Travel plans are made in consultation with the ATAD Program Chair in Rochester and the Program Liaison in the student's overseas country. There is no extension of stay. ATAD students are not to ask for, nor receive an extension of stay. In the event of violation of this policy, ATAD's responsibility ends with the return flight to which the student has been assigned and the student will be considered off program.

Health: All students must have a physical examination and submit a completed medical form before becoming an exchange student. If medication of any kind is needed, it must be reported on the medical form. All subsequent medical problems must be reported to ATAD.

Host Families: Students are assigned to Host Families by ATAD. Each student is expected to adjust to the lifestyle of the Host Family, to follow Host Family customs, and to participate in family activities. If there are adjustment problems, consult with your ATAD Program Liaison in the host country. Usually these problems can be resolved successfully.

Marriage: Married students are not permitted on the ATAD program.

Medical Insurance: Students must assure that they are covered by adequate medical insurance that will apply abroad for the duration of the program.

Money: The Host Family provides housing and food. The American student going overseas provides spending money for personal expenses: postage, telephone calls, clothing, gifts, trips, movies, recreation, etc.. Payment of airline charges for excess baggage is the responsibility of the student.

Pregnancy: If a student is found to be pregnant or to cause a pregnancy while on an ATAD program, the natural parents will be notified, and the student will be returned home or not sent overseas, and will be dismissed from the program.

School Attendance: If the ATAD student is overseas for a semester or year, attendance at a school is required. A normal course of school work should be maintained; non-attendance will result in dismissal from the program. A student who is expelled from school will be considered for dismissal from the program.

School Performance: Students are expected to do their best in school, go to school each school day, do homework on time, take all tests, and participate in class. After a reasonable adjustment time, failure to meet school expectations or requirements, underachievement, or inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Travel: ATAD is a program designed to provide a family living experience, NOT a travel program. American students going overseas agree to travel to and from the Host Family as arranged by ATAD. While living with the Host Family the student may travel with Host Family members after notification of the ATAD Program Liaison in the host country. Travel without the Host Family must meet the following requirements:

- 1) written permission from host parents
- 2) written permission from natural parents
- 3) written invitation from individuals inviting student
- 4) permission from ATAD Program Liaison in the host country
- 5) permission from the school if the travel will require missing school

Unauthorized travel may result in dismissal from the program.

Supervision: The Host Family is responsible for the health and safety of the student. To assist in safety, all ATAD students must have adult supervision for overnight stays.

Visits from Natural, Immediate, or Extended Family and Friends: Natural, immediate, or extended family and friends are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED** from visiting the student during the program. The visit may change the student's relationship with the host family. This is the exchange student's experience, not the natural family's experience. Therefore, the best time for a visit is sometime after the exchange is over.

If the natural, immediate, or extended family and friends have a specific, valid reason why a visit during the program is necessary, then they must:

- Request approval for the visit from their program chair. The program chair will then contact the liaison in the host country.
- Allow the liaison in the host country to discuss the potential visit with the host family.
- Not make travel arrangements until approval is received from the liaison in the host country.

Violations of the Law: ATAD students must abide by all laws (US while here and foreign while overseas). If a student is involved in any violation of the law, the Program Liaison in the host country must be notified immediately. When a student admits to or is convicted of a violation of the law, the student will be considered for dismissal from the program. Theft/shoplifting may become cause for dismissal. The payment of fines and/or restitution of property or stolen funds must be made by the student and natural family. Legal expenses are the responsibility of the student and natural family.

Student as a Responsible Diplomat:

- 1) Students are expected to speak to school and community groups about their country and the positive experiences of living in a different country.
- 2) Students are encouraged to make friends in the foreign country and participate in new activities.
- 3) As representatives of the ATAD program, students are encouraged to help find local students interested in going overseas and to help find families to host International Students.
- 4) Students are encouraged to learn and improve language skills. Students using English in public or social groups may create a feeling of distrust and unfriendliness.
- 5) Students must be cautious when expressing personal views. Exchange students are diplomats and should be aware that some people may interpret their statements as being representative their government.