



International Student Handbook

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The International Student Handbook is meant as a complimentary Handbook to the CCS Student Handbook and will only address areas of interest/concern to International Students. For all general student needs and requirements please see the CCS Parent/Student Handbook.

WELCOME

This handbook has been put together by the International Student Services Office in order to answer the many questions that you might have about attending Chinese Christian Schools (CCS) as an international student. We hope this handbook answers many of your questions, but encourage you to contact us if you ever have any questions about our policies, procedures, support services, etc.

The CCS student population is a combination of U.S. citizens and International Students. Although the ancestry of the majority of our students will be Asian, the difference in cultures between someone raised in America and someone raised in Asia is significant. The International student's presence and integration into academic, community, and student life is essential to the overall vision of CCS: Ensuring that all CCS graduates have the experience and skills to excel in the global environment of the 21st century. As part of this vision, the mission of International Student Services (ISS) is to facilitate the international student's transition to life in the United States and at CCS, promote interactions between the U.S. and the international student population, and provide services necessary to meet the special needs of international students.

As an International student beginning or continuing your education in the States, you likely have questions about U.S. customs and values, living situations, government and school regulations, academic issues, school and community facilities, medical care, banking, shopping, and entertainment. ISS responds to these questions and serves as an information resource for all partners in the international education process, those both at school and in the host family setting.

Responding to the needs of international students also means serving as a liaison between the many partners involved in the international education process. ISS staff assists students, family members, host families, businesses, and faculty and staff from CCS in coordinating the academic and support services for international students. From activities such as host family placement situations to helping students make contact with family members during civil unrest or return home during emergency situations, ISS links all these partners and provides a support network for them.

Note: Information contained in this handbook is subject to change without prior notice. The contents are published as general information only and shall not constitute a binding agreement on the part of Chinese Christian Schools.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Expectations	[4]
Section 2: Cultural Expectations	[6]
Section 3: Culture Shock	[9]
Section 4: Leaving Home	[12]
Section 5: Packing	[13]
Section 6: Arrival	[15]
Section 7: Program Rules & Regulations	[16]
Section 8: Medical & Insurance Information	[19]
Section 9: Financial Issues	[20]
Section 10: Banking Information	[21]
Section 11: Host Family Life	[22]
Section 12: Social Life	[23]
Section 13: School Culture	[24]
Section 14: Academic Integrity	[25]
Section 15: Community Life	[26]
Section 16: Emergencies	[27]
Section 17: Safety	[29]
Section 18: Travel	[30]
Section 19: Departure	[31]
Section 20: Re-entry	[32]
Section 21: Resources	[34]
Appendix	[36]

Section 1: Roles & Responsibilities

Chinese Christian Schools

(Hereafter referred to as CCS), with 25 years in the California Bay Area, CCS promises to do its best to provide you with a high quality educational experience that will help you in all areas of life, as it is well known for in the area.

International Student Services

(Hereafter referred to as ISS). CCS ISS Staff will be your main advocate in the school and community where you will live. CCS ISS staff will provide a variety of services to support you while you prepare to depart your home country, while you are living in the U.S., and also after you return home.

Information/Communication

- ISS provides the student and family with this student manual as a reference for the resources we provide and the guidelines for expectations from CCS.
- We provide orientation to life in the U.S. and to CCS for the student soon after arrival in the U.S. This formal orientation seminar will cover the following:
 - Living essentials and host family housing
 - Personal safety issues
 - Transportation and travel
 - School policies and federal regulations
 - Student activities
 - Basic academic information
- A member of the ISS Department will maintain regular meetings with each student to answer any questions that may arise from the academic, social, cultural, housing experience.
- We provide regular communication with the student's family in order to apprise them of how the student is progressing in the social/cultural arenas.

Housing and Lodging

- ISS coordinates the student's placement with a host family living situation or a group/dorm home setting under the student placement guidelines.
- We meet regularly with both the student and the host family or dorm parents (separately and/or together as the situation warrants) to address any questions or issues that arise during the student's stay with the host family.
- We interview, screen and inspect housing of all prospective host families before accepting them into the program.
- We oversee the management of all properties used for dorm/group living type housing.

Personal Support

- ISS assists the student in the event of personal or family emergencies.
- We assist the student in establishing friends, mentors, and support structure.
- We arrange for counselors, medical check-ups, and professional services as needed.
- We facilitate conflict resolution as needed.
- We educate students regarding personal safety

Cultural Transition Support

- ISS supports cultural adjustment and socialization issues.
- We provide a formal cultural orientation session soon after arrival in the States.

Cultural Education/Experience

- Throughout the year, we will provide opportunities to experience American culture first hand. Some possibilities include museum visits, sporting events, performing arts, camping, and American cooking.

Miscellaneous

- Health insurance and health care
- Academic concerns and CCS policies
- Travel, transportation, banking, and other settling-in needs
- English Language Conversation Partners
- We manage programs for faculty and staff regarding international student issues.

Your Host Family

If you are enrolled in our Host Family Program, you will be living with an American family and for all practical purposes you will be considered to be a member of the family. They will be like your second family away from home.

They will house you, provide your meals and transportation, and serve as your main support while you are living in the host country. The makeup of your host family can vary. Some families will have one parent, some will have two parents, some will have no children, some will have several children, and some may have other relatives living with them. Some might have a pet. Once you receive your host family's contact information you should begin communicating with them.

Because the population in San Francisco Bay Area is very diverse, it is quite possible you will be placed in a non-Caucasian household. Rest assured you will still be exposed to American culture on a daily basis. All host families will primarily speak English at home but they also may speak your native language to some degree.

The host parents will have legal guardianship of students as well as the same basic daily authority as the natural parents. Host parents are empowered to make all decisions about home life including, but not limited to curfews, bedtimes, television viewing (time and content), event attendance, house chores, internet and phone usage.

Your Guardians

If you will be living with a relative or a friend of your family, they will be your legal guardians. Much like a host family, they will house you, provide your meal and transportation, and be your support system.

You

- Attend school regularly
- Follow all school rules and policies
- Be able to communicate and follow course work in English
- Learn about American Culture (See Appendix I to start)

Section 2: Cultural Expectations

A General Outline of American Culture

- **Informality:** Americans are often very informal in both their dress and their interactions with others. Books are most often carried in a backpack rather than a briefcase. You will also notice that this informality is also expressed in some class behavior.
- People frequently call each other by their first names, and are often introduced only by first names when they meet, which should not be seen as a lack of respect. It's more an indication of mutual respect, equality, and a willingness to engage in open dialogue and intellectual exchange. You may call persons your own age and your colleagues by their first names. It is best, however, to address teachers and older persons with their title (Dr., Teacher, Mr., Mrs., or Ms.) unless they ask you to do otherwise.
- **Time:** Despite their informality in other aspects of life, Americans are very concerned about time. For them, time is valuable and must be used carefully and productively. Punctuality is very important and it is considered rude to be late. Classes, meetings, and appointments generally start within a few minutes of their set time. If you know you are going to be late for an appointment you should call prior to the appointment time and give an explanation.
- **Work Orientation:** Americans place a high value on hard work; they judge people by how hard they work and how task oriented they are.
- **Achievement Orientation:** A very high value is placed on a person's accomplishments and productivity. Individuals evaluate themselves and are evaluated by others in terms of their achievements and accomplishments.
- **Individualism:** Americans view themselves primarily as individuals with the freedom and responsibility to manage their own lives, make their own decisions, and accomplish their own goals. In this culture, people are not comfortable being obligated to or dependent on others.
- **Personal Space:** Unlike many other cultures, Americans tend to stand about two or three feet apart when talking to one another and often feel crowded when closer. If a person feels uncomfortable he or she may move away to create more distance. This should not be seen as a sign of rudeness as they are just re-establishing their personal space. Americans also like to make eye contact when talking to each other.
- **Directness and Assertiveness:** Americans generally are frank, open, and direct in their dealings with other people. They often speak directly and openly to others about things they dislike. If they do not speak openly about what is on their minds, they will often convey their reactions in nonverbal ways (without words, but through facial expressions, body positions, and gestures). Americans are not taught, as people in many Asian countries are, that they should guard their emotional responses. Their words, the tone of their voice, or their facial expressions will usually reveal when they are feeling – angry, unhappy, confused, or happy and content.
- **Greetings:** When meeting someone for the first time, Americans usually shake hands and say "Hi," "Pleased to meet you" or "How do you do?" When greeting someone you are already acquainted with, you may smile or wave. A common greeting is "How are you?" The usual response to this question is "I'm fine, thanks." The person asking generally does not expect a detailed response. Similarly, phrases such as "See you later" are just ways of saying goodbye and do not imply an invitation.
- **Personal Hygiene:** While Americans are very casual in their dress, they are preoccupied with looking and smelling good, as well as making sure that items are "bacteria free". They use many varieties of soap, deodorant, and perfumes. You will also notice that stores are filled with items to lend pleasant smells to the homes, clothes, etc., while also killing bacteria. For some visitors to the U.S., this huge variety of artificial smells used simultaneously may be overwhelming. In addition, U.S. citizens might react negatively to those who do not follow these same practices or who do not

bathe regularly, use deodorants and/or mouthwashes, or regularly wash their clothing. Also recognize that not all Americans follow the practices described above, although the majorities do.

- **Personal Dress:** In the United States one's way of dressing is expected to suit the circumstance:
 - As students, the school uniform is required.
 - Outside of school, be observant of what others are wearing or ask someone before wearing casual clothes to an event.
 - Also note that because people are dressed casually doesn't mean it's an informal environment or that teachers are to be treated as equals.
- **Social Invitations:** While you are here, we hope that you will meet and spend time with Americans other than your host family. These suggestions may help you feel more comfortable when you are invited out.
 - The invitation is usually for you only unless the person(s) inviting you specifically invites your host family or friends. Bringing guests of your own without asking your host's permission is considered impolite.
 - A written invitation will include the date, time, place, and description of the occasion. You should always answer a written invitation, especially if it says R.S.V.P. (Please respond). You may respond by telephone or by letter: prompt notice is appreciated.
 - Never accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. If you must decline an invitation, it is enough to say, "Thank you for the invitation, but I am unable to attend". If an unavoidable problem makes it necessary for you to change plans, be certain to tell the host as soon as possible before the time when you are expected.
 - Make sure you get directions to the place where the event will be held.
 - You are not expected to bring a gift, but if you wish to show your appreciation, flowers or other small items are appropriate.
 - If someone invites you to a dinner at their home, it is acceptable to inform them if you cannot eat certain foods. Your host will appreciate knowing this in advance, as many people in the U.S. have special diets that they must follow. Your host will be very embarrassed if foods are prepared which you cannot eat.

Life in the San Francisco Bay Area

San Francisco Bay Area is considered one of the greatest areas in the world for many things, including five-star dining, a happening theater scene, and diverse culture. In Bay Area, there's so much to explore, including Silicon Valley's innovations, Marin's Headlands, the Napa Valley's vineyards, and Berkeley's free spirit.

- **Weather**

Late summer and early fall are typically the warmest and driest in the Bay Area, with highs in the 70s°F (21.1°C) and 80s°F (26.7°C). November through April brings rain and temperatures in the 50s°F (10°C). Days in May, June and July often begin and end with fog, which can clear mid-day.

- **Enrichment**

The San Francisco Bay Area is considered one of the greatest areas in the world for many reasons, including five-star dining, a thriving theater scene, and a multi-ethnic culture. There's so much to explore in the surrounding areas, including Silicon Valley's innovations, Marin's Headlands, the Napa Valley's vineyards, and Berkeley's free spirit.

- **People**

California takes its strength from its diversity. California's immigrant population adds flair to the state that you will not find anywhere else. Here, 39% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, meaning California has more foreign language speakers than any other state in the country. On city streets from San Francisco to Los Angeles, you'll hear Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Tagalog, Russian, Italian and more.

Know your own Culture

Knowing your own culture and how that has affected who you are and where you come from will help you process your cross-cultural experience. Here are some important questions to think about as you prepare to depart your country and enter into a new country with new cultures different to your own:

- How do you greet each other?
- How do you communicate emotions?
- How do you show you are angry, happy, or annoyed at a person?
- What manners or etiquette are typical?
- What types of transportation do you use?
- What kinds of houses do people live in?
- What values are important in your culture?
- What type of living environment are you used to?
- What is your government like?
- What are your major holidays? Why and how do you celebrate these holidays?
- How are the economics of your country?
- What is the social life like?

Section 3: Culture Shock

A. Introduction to Culture Shock

You are on a journey. Coming to the United States may be considered the journey of a lifetime! You had your life to live in your home country and you also had your dreams of competing academically in a foreign setting. You had familiar surroundings that gave you security and comfort and yet you longed for new adventures and new experiences to stretch your wings and your imagination. Your journey is different because of your background and experience. You have a point of reference or a "mental map" you call your culture. This "mental map" is an integrated set of beliefs, ideas, and products that shape the way you live, evaluate your life, and interpret the lives of others around you. When your "mental map" meets the American "mental map" you find yourself in a state of adventure, confusion, frustration, and self-discovery. How do you go about your journey into the American way of doing things? What map should you follow to understand the language and thinking of your American professors, classmates, and friends?

Those who have studied cross-cultural travelers have discovered that they seem to follow a particular path or pattern. They have identified certain stages that travelers go through.

B. Stages of Culture Shock

FUN Stage - Different is Great and Wonderful.

You go through this initial stage of wide-eyed excitement where everything is new, pleasant, and nice. It may be the simple and efficient way that systems work, the clean surroundings or the quality of professors and research facilities you have. Or it may just be simple freedom that makes the transition to the United States a wonderful experience! Or it may be the joy of being by yourself with no parents to watch and control your life and no social structures to answer to (even temporarily). Or this stage is fun because of the wonderful people you meet who impress you with their informality and generosity. Aside from the modern gadgets of life you also appreciate the abundant and inexpensive foods available to you (even if they are bland to your spicy taste buds). This stage is full of the new and the wonderful.

FLIGHT Stage - Different and Unpleasant

A new feeling sets in at this stage. The wear and tear of cross-cultural living is showing its toll. What used to fascinate you may no longer invite the initial response of wonderment. Instead, you may find yourself confused and dissatisfied, alone and distant to your new world. You may find yourself avoiding contact with the American people or the American system.

The common phrase to describe this feeling is "Culture shock" - it is the emotional response to the newness of the environment which is sometimes accompanied by physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, sleeplessness, and even nausea.

The expected response of the traveler at this stage is that of avoidance. You pull away from the stress of cross-cultural living by staying in your room, being by yourself, or by just staying with your own people.

You will also find yourself emotionally "flying" back home. Wishing you could be back home is a nice thought to entertain at this stage. You are beginning to say to yourself and even to others, "I do not like this place."

FIGHT Stage- Different and Bad; Different and Foolish

At this stage things are not looking up. You may start to say "I hate this place." You may find yourself at the bottom of the U-curve. The things you see and experience all point to the negative aspect of your journey to this country. During this period, you may discover that the people are not as nice as you thought they were, or you feel misunderstood and embarrassed. Perhaps your English is not improving as fast as you want, or your professor may be insensitive to your needs, or you have not made any friend yet, and to top it all, winter has set in and you are lonely and even angry.

Additionally, you may also be tempted to mock and make fun of the new culture and the way people do things. BUT remember this is only a stage- hopefully a temporary state of mind and feelings.

FIT Stage – Different but OK; Different but Reasonable; Different but Open to Interaction/Transaction

This is the hopeful stage. With time, patience, perseverance, and the help of new friends you will find yourself feeling better about your new environment and about yourself.

You will find yourself more tolerant of the many new things around you. It does not mean you approve of those things, but it means you are able to accept them as part of the new culture. You will also begin to discover the bigger picture of the new culture and the reason why Americans do what they do. As you see their values, attitudes, and behavior in the context of their culture, you are able to understand more and criticize less. In addition, you will also find yourself more open and ready to new ideas and ways of doing things. As you engage in the life on campus and the community, your confidence in living, interacting, and contributing to your new culture increases.

HOW LONG MAY THIS WHOLE PROCESS TAKE? A psychologist, who has studied and seen cross-cultural travelers, has said that it can take from 6 months to a year.

C. Responses to Culture Shock

Your response to the challenge of cultural living may be one or a combination of imitation, isolation or integration. You will need to imitate the ways of the new culture in order to enter their world. This imitation does not mean embracing everything about the new culture. It is more a selective imitation where you copy at the level that is comfortable to you (conscience-approved – what is consistent with and closer to your own values and beliefs). You also imitate and follow the generally accepted procedure and behavior in your new social circles. As you learn through following the local people, you begin to understand and appreciate the actual cultural behaviors and the meanings behind them.

Isolation is a response where you pull away (physically and emotionally) from cross-cultural encounters. You distance yourself from events that call for heavy interaction with the nationals or a greater cultural leap on your part (e.g. participating in class or answering the phone). As you pull away from such encounters you will find comfort in being with your own people, speaking your language and eating your common food. Isolation is healthy to keep your cultural and emotional balance but it becomes unproductive when it keeps you from learning from your cross-cultural experience. However, unguarded isolation can also lead to intense loneliness and even depression.

Integration is mixing with the culture. You feel safe and comfortable in your new world. Your confidence leads you to contribute to your new culture through participation in events, sharing of ideas in discussions, and even cooking your favorite food for others.

Over time you will feel more secure about who you are and your place in your new culture. You may still feel like an outsider and yet you know that you have the respect and trust of your hosts and new friends. There will be cultural tensions along the way, but you are learning a new culture, acquiring a new set of skills, and maturing in your understanding of your self and the world.

Remember that learning a culture takes time. Observe, ask questions, experiment with new cultural ways of doing things, and experience the great lessons of cross-cultural living.

BUT the following things are key:

- Understand that you are in transition. Be kind and gentle to yourself.
- Find a friend who can explain the American cultural road map to you.
- Remember that your transition is many-layered -- academic, social, emotional, physical,

spiritual, political, and financial. Some areas of transition may be easier than others.

- Enjoy your journey with a good sense of humor and a great sense of learning and adventure.
- Try to avoid isolation- talk to your friends, your host family or others about what you are feeling. Remember, these are normal reactions to stress and are nothing to be ashamed of.
- Give yourself time to adjust and time to get used to where you are living. We discourage visits from family and friends during the beginning of the school year to that you can thoroughly adjust.
- Get involved in student organizations.
- Keep in touch with home. E-mail or call your family to keep them up-to-date on what is happening to you and what you are experiencing.
- Keep your sense of humor. Try to laugh off situations that are confusing.
- Try to withhold judgment on something until you understand it.
- Don't be afraid to ask people about situations you do not understand.
- Take care of your health, exercise, and eat well.
- Do things you enjoy doing: paint, play music, etc.
- Seek support from family, friends, teachers, or the ISS office

D. Loneliness and Homesickness

As you adjust to a new life, it is highly likely that you will experience some homesickness as you mourn the loss of life, as you once knew it, your family and friends, and all things that were once familiar to you. This is normal! Here are some ways that will help when homesickness hits:

- Talk to someone about what you are feeling. Your host family, ISS staff, or new friends are all good choices.
- Stay active. Sitting at home in your room looking at photos of family and friends will not help the homesickness pass. Keeping active keeps your mind on other things besides home.
- Get involved with activities at school or with your host family/guardians.

Section 4: Leaving Home

Visa & Passport Info

Once you are accepted into CCS, you will need to apply for your visa that will be stamped into your passport.

You will need an F-1 student visa to study in the United States, which is a nonimmigrant visa granted by the American consulate or embassy in your home country. This visa does not guarantee your entry into the United States; however, without it you will not be allowed to enter and legally live and study in the United States. The primary purpose of this visa is educational, and it is usually granted to a student for the duration of his or her studies. When you enter the United States, you are entering as a student for the purposes of study.

In order to apply for an F-1 visa, you must have a letter of acceptance from CCS and an I-20 form issued by the school you attend in your home country, and you must pay the SEVIS fee (Form I-907) You will need to present these items, along with proof of your ability to pay for your studies, to the American consulate or embassy when you apply for your visa.

For those students entering the United States, you will be issued an Arrival Departure Records Form (I-94 form). Keep this form with your passport throughout your stay because it will contain vital information about your visit.

For more extensive information about your passport and visa, please visit your local American embassy and check out the below websites:

- www.uscis.gov
- http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1270.html

Goodbyes

Good-byes are an important part of your preparations to depart, so make sure you take time to say good-bye to the important people in your life at home.

- Arrange a time to see your friends and family, including extended family, before you leave.
- Share with them about what you will be doing and where you will be going.
- Allow them to ask questions and to voice concerns. Emphasize the importance of your relationship with them, but explain that communication will be different and less frequent than it is when you are at home. This is also a good time to remind them that while you may change from your study abroad time, you will always love them and love to hear from them while you are gone.
- Let them know how they can stay in touch with you while you are away. (Mailing address, email address, phone number, etc.)

Keeping in touch

- **Telephone:** There are long distance companies, calling cards, and international cell phones that you may buy to call home. Calling cards may be bought at many stores. All calling methods can be very expensive. To call internationally, enter 1-011-country code-telephone number.
- **Internet:** The Internet can be a cheap and convenient way to keep in touch with people at home. You will need to set up your own personal email address, as CCS will not provide one for you. Before you leave home, you may want to help your parents set up Skype.
- **Mail:** Mailing letters and packages home is also a good way to keep in contact. Although, be prepared for mail to take a little longer to arrive in your country. International shipping on packages can also tend to be very expensive for heavy packages. Letters or packages from your parents or friends may be sent to your guardian's home address.

Section 5: Packing

Luggage

- Be sure to check with your airline and/or travel agent to find out the current luggage allowances for checked and carry-on baggage. In-country flights may have different luggage requirements than international flights.
- Also, check with your airline for security regulations.
- Ideal luggage would be made of lightweight but durable material and come with wheels. If you cannot comfortably take care of your luggage yourself, then you might need to bring a smaller suitcase or pack less.
- On a luggage tag, write your name, address, and phone number and attach it to the outside of your luggage.
- Remember not to stuff your suitcase to the limit since you will be acquiring more things during the school year that you will probably want to bring home with you (school books, souvenirs, etc.).

What to Pack

When packing, it is important to remember not to over pack. You will be tempted to bring everything with you because you are unsure of what you will need for different events and seasons. Below are some guidelines to help you pack.

VERY Important Things to Bring

- Passport and visa
- Evidence of your financial resources (such as copies of your parents' bank statement)
- Evidence of your student status (such as recent tuition receipts and transcripts)
- Paper receipt indicating payment of any immigration fees (for students traveling to the U.S., the SEVIS fee, Form 1-797)
- Anything else that the host country consulate or embassy required when you applied for your visa
- CCS and ISS contact information (including name, address, phone #, email address)
- Contact information for your host parents or guardians
- A telephone calling card that can be used in the United States

Things to Bring

- When packing clothes, consider the climate. Bring comfortable clothes both for school and for recreational activities. Choose only a few pairs of shoes to take. Do not take your entire wardrobe! Remember that CCS has required uniforms, so you will be wearing your school uniform most of the time. Please refer to the Student Handbook for uniform requirements. Bring one or two dressier items, such as a sports jacket and tie or dress, for those occasional events where you might need to dress up more than normal.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take a copy of your prescription. If you wear disposable contact lenses, bring a supply that will last throughout your stay.
- You may bring electronic devices such as digital cameras, mp3 players, and laptop computers, but make sure you have the correct information about the electrical system in your host country. (Electrical current in North America is 60 hertz and is usually 120 volts, alternating current.) You may need to purchase plug adapters or converters when you arrive.
- Consider bringing a journal to record your thoughts and experiences.
- Bring some pictures of your family and home for yourself and to share with your host family/guardians and new friends.
- Small gifts from your home country for new friends, host family/guardians, or school staff are a great way to say thank you or simply as a way to share information about your

culture with others. You might want to save these gifts for a special occasion like a birthday or as a thank-you before you leave.

- Small comfort items that will help you through your transition.
- Do not take large amounts of American money currency. We recommend you carry a small amount of cash along with a debit card.
- Small electronic dictionary for translating English words into your language and visa versa (these are harder, and often more expensive, to find here in America than they would be in your home country)
- Important documents: Passport, copies of all your medical papers.

Things Not to Bring

- Do not take your entire CD or DVD collection or your entire book library. Just take a few of your favorites.
- Do not bring furniture or other large items.
- Do not bring too fragile or breakable (such as glass)

Things that will be Provided

- A bed, a dresser for your clothes, a desk & chair for studying
- Bedding, pillow, towels

Things that can be Bought Here

- School uniforms. After you arrive, your host family or guardian will take you to the uniform store where you can purchase the clothes you will need for school. Physical education clothes can be purchased directly from CCS at your orientation or at the beginning of school.
- School supplies such as paper, notebooks, pens, calculators, etc.
- Basic medicines for colds, flu, coughs, headaches, etc.
- Toiletry items such as soap, laundry detergent, shampoo, tissue, etc
- Clothes for different seasons. If you do not want to bring clothes for all seasons, you can buy clothes here. Please be sure to put the additional cost of clothes into your budget.

Section 6: Arrival

Airport

Arrangements will have been made to pick you up at the airport. If you are enrolled in the Host Family Program, either a CCS staff member or your host family will pick you up and take you to your new home, otherwise your guardian will pick you up.

In-country orientation

Orientation for all new international students is required during the first week of arrival. Your guardians will bring you to and from this meeting. Not only will this orientation help you in your transition to life in America, it will also be a great place to meet some of your new classmates. Orientation will cover things in this handbook plus other important information regarding school.

First Days

The first few days after you arrive will be a very exciting time for you. Try to take some time at the end of each day to record what happened, what you experienced that was new, people that you met, and your feelings about your transition to America. This will be a great way to remember how you felt upon arrival.

Remember that you will also have jet lag and be adjusting to the new time change. Try to get more rest than you normally would at home. You will be excited and probably have many things you want to get accomplished, but make sure you take time to rest.

Section 7: Program Rules & Regulations

General Rules

- The student is expected to exhibit positive character and behavior at all times, including (but not limited to) trustworthiness, responsibility, respectfulness, caring, citizenship and fairness.
- Disruptive behavior including swearing, misbehavior in class and on outings, pranks, and other such things will not be permitted. The student should dress appropriately, use appropriate language and respect the rights of others at school and at home.
- Respect and obedience is extremely important at all times. The student is to be respectful of all school rules, school personnel, and school property. Any repair fees due to damage done to school property is the sole responsibility of the student and his or her parents.
- The student must obey the laws of the United States, the state of California and any states they may visit while in the United States. If found guilty of violating any law, the student must return home at his or her family's own expense as soon as the student is released by authorities. A school representative will ensure that the student is transported to the airport.
- The student must attend all scheduled orientation training meetings and assignments as directed by ISS. These meetings and assignments are designed to prepare the student and his or her family for the student's participation in the program, adjustment to the U.S., and reentry to the home country.
- The school is designed to increase understanding among people of the world through cultural learning and interaction; it is not to be used for the sole purpose of foreign language training for the student, although this will be a natural result. The student's parents should discuss the importance of good behavior with their son or daughter and ensure that he or she understands the significance of acting in a manner that will reflect well on his or her family and country.
- The student should make every effort to improve his or her English ability by getting involved at school and in the community. Community involvement includes attending events and volunteering. He or she should plan recreation and spare-time activities around school, church, or community events. The student should not spend all his or her time with other international students. Also, students should choose friends carefully by asking for and heeding the advice of host parents/guardians, counselors, and school personnel.
- The student may not operate a motorized vehicle unless he or she has a valid United States license. A license may be obtained only under the ISS Driver's License Policy.
- The student's acceptance into the school does not guarantee:
 - A diploma and graduation
 - Eligibility to participate in athletics.
- The student's parents (and the student, if the student is of legal age) give the school the right to use the student's photograph and video clips for reproduction in any medium for the purposes of publication, advertising, display, or editorial use. When using the student's picture, the school will not disclose the name of the student or any

additional personal or contact information.

- Inappropriate use of the Internet by the student, including viewing pornography and visiting questionable websites, is not acceptable. Such activity will first result in a warning, and subsequent activity will result in program termination.
- The school reserves the right to terminate the participation in the program of any student whose conduct may be considered detrimental or incompatible with the interests and security of the program. If this decision is ever made, the participant and his and her parents will be notified in writing and all fees that have been paid will be nonrefundable.

Laws of the U.S.

- The student must obey the laws of the United States and the State California and states where they visit. If found guilty of violating any law, the student must return home at his or her family's own expense as soon as the student is released by authorities. A school representative will ensure that the student is transported to the airport.
- The drinking of any alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. The legal age to drink alcohol in the U.S. is 21 years old; therefore those under the age of 21 cannot drink or buy alcohol. In addition, the student may not be associated with or remain in the presences of others using the substances.
- Students are not to use any type of drugs (legal or illegal) while in the United States, other than those prescribed by a doctor or those bought over the counter at stores. Students must adhere to the school's policy on taking prescription medicines while on campus.
- Smoking and the use of any tobacco products are forbidden. (Most U.S. states forbid the use of tobacco products for those under the age of 18. Though other countries and provinces may allow the use of tobacco products, the use of such products has been proven to be a serious health risk. Therefore, this program forbids the use of tobacco products of any kind.)

Health

- As noted previously, the student must have insurance that provides emergency health, medical, and accident coverage for injury and illness; death benefits (including repatriation of remains); disability or dismemberment benefits; emergency medical evacuation; emergency visitation expenses; 24-hour emergency assistance services; and legal services. The coverage must be active from the time of the student's departure until the student's return. If the student does not have personal insurance before departure of the home country, he or she should enroll in the emergency insurance provided through the school for an additional fee.
- The student is forbidden from participating in any dangerous sport or activity such as hang gliding, bungee jumping, sky diving, or being a passenger in a private plane. If the student participates in any of the above activities or any other dangerous activity, he or she may be immediately returned home at his or her family's expense. The family will accept full responsibility for any situation arising from the student's involvement with the above.
- The student will abstain from all sexual activity. Serious romantic involvement is strongly discouraged.

- For health reasons, the student is not allowed to get a new tattoo or body piercing during the program. (It is acceptable for students participating in ISS Program to have existing tattoos or piercing; however, the student will be subject to the school rules regarding the display or wearing of such items.)

Finances

- The student should have sufficient financial support to ensure his or her well being during the entire program and to cover all expenses that may arise. Expenses that must be covered by the student and his or her parents include the following:
 - All program fees
 - All school tuition, fees, and uniforms
 - Round-trip international airfare, passport, and visa
 - Health, medical, dental, and accident insurance, and any medical expenses not covered by insurance
 - Any costs related to the early return of the student to his or her home country for any reason
 - Personal day-to-day expenses such as telephone calls, clothes, and recreational activities (suggested amount: about \$100- \$200 a month)
 - Additional costs as circumstances arise
- The student and his or her parents must pay bills promptly.
- The student is not permitted to borrow money.
- If for any reason, including denial of visa, the student is unable to participate in the program, a percentage of the program fee may be refunded, depending on the timing of the student's notice of withdrawal from school.

Travel

- The student and his or her parents are required to purchase round-trip international air travel before the student departs from his or her home country. Students must arrive and depart on the suggested dates given by ISS.
- The student is permitted to travel domestically with his or her guardians or for school-related activities with school staff or for school activities with proper adult chaperones. ISS, the student's guardians, and the student's parents must approve any other travel in writing. Independent travel, where the student will spend time at a particular destination without proper adult supervision, is not allowed at any time during the program. (If a student is given the opportunity to go on a trip or attend an event, the student must make sure he or she understands all costs and responsibilities involved before going.)
- The student must, within 10 days of the last day of school, either return home or be enrolled in the school's summer school program. The school will not guarantee host families during the summer break but with enough notice may be able to locate one. If a student is not enrolled in summer school, he or she must return home.

Consequences of Violation:

If the student is found in violation of the actions listed above and receives disciplinary action issued through the review process, his/her parents/guardians will be notified, the student may be sent home at the parents' expense, and may be suspended from any future involvement with the school.

Section 8: Medical & Insurance Information

1. Yearly medical examinations

You will need a full medical exam and medical clearance from your physician before you are accepted into the school. If you are planning on attending the school for more than one year, you are required to get a complete physical every summer before returning to school in the fall.

2. Immunizations

You are responsible to have all required immunizations before you arrive in the U.S. Please see the Centers for Disease Control's website (www.cdc.gov/travel) for a list of immunizations you will need. Consult with your physician to ensure that you get your immunizations taken care of before departing.

3. Insurance

If you don't already have health insurance, you will be required to sign up for insurance using the insurance provider recommended by the school. This insurance is not for preventative health care. Students should plan on having any major medical, dental, or eye examinations in their home country and not while living in the host country. The coverage will be active from the time of your departure from your home country until your return. You will receive confirmation of your insurance and information about your before you depart from your home country. Please carry your insurance card at all times.

This insurance will include:

- Emergency health care
- Medical and accident coverage for injury and illness
- Death benefits (including repatriation of remains)
- Disability and dismemberment benefits
- Emergency medical evacuation
- Emergency visitation expenses
- 24-hour emergency assistance services
- Liability

4. Eye & Dental Problems

Your medical insurance does not cover expenses related to dental care and vision correction. Should you need these types of treatment while here in the States, you will need to contact your parents before treatment and make arrangements for the payment, either by credit card or with a bank draft sent by your parents.

5. Minor Illnesses

You should let your host parents or guardians know of any minor illnesses such as colds, sore throats, flu, upper respiratory infections, and sprains when you experience them. They will help you determine what type of treatment or action should be taken.

6. Emotional Concerns

If you are experiencing any drastic out-of-the character emotions, such as feelings of depression, sadness, or disconnect, please let your host parents, guardians, or ISS staff know. We are here to help you in whatever way possible.

7. Major Illnesses & Hospital Admittance

You or your guardians should always notify ISS in the event of serious medical situations or conditions. Serious situations would include any type of on-going illness, a broken bone, hospitalization, proposed or emergency surgery, or any lingering condition. We will make all effort to reach your natural parents for consent before treatment, if, however, the situation is life-threatening, your legal guardian can authorize treatment or surgery on behalf of your parents by presenting the "Guardian Authorization Form" to the hospital.

Section 9: Financial Issues

[Your host family's responsibilities]

*Please note that this arrangement will not be the same if you are living with relatives or family friends and have made your own arrangements.

- Meals: Your host family will provide 3 meals a day on non-school days, 2 meals on school days.
- Outings: You should not assume your host family will pay for a special outing. If you are not sure, ask.
- General use of house shared items such as toilet paper, laundry detergent, cleaners, etc. If you wish to have something else besides what the host family already has, you are responsible to pay for that (ex. a preferred shampoo brand).

[Your responsibilities]

1. Budget

Before you depart, it is very important to sit down with your parents and discuss a budget. Items that will be your financial responsibility and are important to include in your budget:

- All program fees, school tuition, fees, school supplies, and uniforms
- Extracurricular fees (if you choose to participate)
- Special school events (ex. Banquets, graduation, yearbooks, and class outings)
- Round-trip international airfare, passport, and visa
- Health, medical, dental, and accident insurance, and any medical expenses not covered by insurance
- Any costs related to the early return to your home country for any reason
- Personal day-to-day expenses such as toiletries, telephone calls, clothes, and recreational activities like trips or special events. (Suggested amount: about \$200 a month)
- Additional costs as circumstances arise

2. Emergency Funds

Emergency funds should be worked into your budget also. Although we hope that an emergency will not occur, things do come up; therefore, it is best to be prepared. You and your parents should decide how much to set aside for emergencies and when and how to distribute that money to you.

3. Shopping

You will probably have many opportunities to go shopping.

- Personal Items/Clothing: Personal items will be less expensive at stores like Wal-Mart or Target. Your host family will be able to assist with identifying the best places to make these types of purchases.
- Sales Tax: California has a 9.75% sales tax that is added to the purchase price of items bought in California stores. Be aware that the price tags do not reflect this tax; it is added on at the register.

Although most foods are not taxed, some prepared foods (as well as all other items purchased in the supermarket) are. Food served in restaurants is taxed. It is also American custom to leave a tip at a restaurant to thank the wait staff for good service. The tip is usually 10-20% of the total bill. It can be left on the table in cash or added to the total bill if charged.

- Buying Items on Credit: Americans may be known for their love to buy things on credit. Before you buy on credit, or "charge it," make sure you understand the interest charges and all terms of the charge agreement. Charge accounts use plastic charge cards and allow you to purchase merchandise and then pay for it later. If the bill is paid in full within 30 days, then there is usually no interest charge. If the entire bill is not paid every month, then interest will be charged on the remaining balance of your account.

Section 10: Banking Information

Banking Information

There are different kinds of bank accounts. The most common are:

Savings Account:

- Your money earns interest, but there may be a fee for frequent withdrawals. Some banks charge a monthly fee if the balance in the account is below a specified amount.
- It is used to deposit money for safekeeping over a long period of time.

Checking Account:

- Designed to hold your money safely in a bank, but allow you to spend it as you wish.
- Some earn interest and have restrictions on the number of checks you can write.
- Most have minimum balances required and penalties for going below that amount.
- After opening a checking account, you will receive an account number and personalized checks, which will be charged, to your account.
- Checks may be written for cash or directly to a business to pay bills or services. You will need identification such as a driver's license or California ID card to cash checks.

Bank Services

Most banks will provide the following basic services as well as several other special services. Before opening an account, ask the bank about the services it provides:

- *Bank Statements* - Printed record of your account activity sent monthly from the bank.
- *Automated Teller Machine Cards (ATM Cards)* - A plastic card issued by the bank that allows for immediate cash withdrawals from either checking or savings accounts 24 hours a day at special banking machines called automated tellers (ATMs) (Personal Identification Number (PIN) required).
- *Wiring Service for Money* - Enables long-distance electronic transfer of funds.
- *Foreign Currency Exchange* - Amount of foreign currency that may be traded for U.S. currency.
- *Check cashing* - Withdrawal of funds from your account by writing a check in exchange for cash.

Banking Terms Defined

- *Balance* - The current amount of money you have in your bank account. This term is also used to refer to the process of reconciling the checks you have written to the bank statement.
- *Insufficient Funds/Overdraft* - Occurs when a check has been written, but you do not have enough money in your account to cover it. There are charges of \$20-25 per check for this. Also, it becomes part of your legal record.
- *Direct Deposit* - Funds are deposited electronically into your account by another institution.
- *Bank Teller* - Employee of a bank that handles the exchange of money.
- *Service Charge* - These are monthly fees the bank withdraws from your account for maintaining it.
- *Interest Earned* - The bank pays you a percentage of your account for keeping your money in the institution.
- *Interest Paid* - The amount the bank charges you for borrowing money from them (see "loan").
- *Debit* - A withdrawal of funds from a bank.

Section 11: Host Family Life

Family Involvement

Your host family is now your second family! You should plan to become a part of your host family in all areas – including joining in family activities, conversing regularly with them, helping with chores, and contributing to the family. Just as in your family of origin, there needs to be order in your host family.

Family Rules

While you are living with your host family, you will be treated as part of their family. This includes obeying all house rules just like you were another one of their children. House rules include, but are not limited to: doing daily chores, obeying curfew times, how to treat other people, etc.

- **Computer Usage:** Although you will have your own laptop with which to do school work, you may not be able to access the Internet on your computer at your host parents' home. Therefore it maybe necessary to use their computer to check email, use Skype, etc. If your host parents let you use their computer, you must remember to be courteous of how much time you are on the computer. The same rule applies to the use of your host family's Internet and broadband access.
- **Phone Usage:** Please discuss with your host parents the rules regarding using the phone to make local and long distant calls. You will need to keep track of how long you talk and reimburse your host family accordingly. You may also consider purchasing a cell phone that can make international calls to avoid having to use the home phone. Please keep in mind the amount of time your spend on the phone (or online) with friends and family back home. While it is good to keep in contact with them, being in constant communication not only make the transition more difficult, it also takes away time from being with your host family and your studies. It is a good idea to limit the amount of time you spend communicating home to not more than once every 1 or 2 weeks.

Transportation

1. Daily Transportation: Your host family will usually provide transportation to and from activities. For school, some may have you take the school bus or they may drive you themselves. If you need transportation to a special activity, please be considerate of your host parents' schedules. Ask them 2-3 weeks before the event so that they can fit it into their schedules or give you time to work out an alternative transportation mode together, such as transportation from a friend's parent or public transportation. Please remember to get permission before being transported by others.

2. Public Transportation: While public transportation in the United States may not be as extensive as what you are use to in your home country, we do have several options in the Bay Area that you may want to utilize.

- **Buses:** Check <http://www.actransit.org/> for the nearest bus lines.
- **BART:** (Bay Area Rapid Transport) <http://www.bart.gov/>
- **Taxis:** Taxis are not as commonly used in the Bay Area as they are in other parts of the country and world. If you need a taxi to go somewhere, you will need to call for one.

3. Driver's License: In the U.S., all drivers must have a driver's license. Although, young people may get their license at age 16, ISS has certain policies in order to ensure safety and educational standing with our students. Please see the ISS Driver's License policy if you are interested in obtaining your license.

Visits by your family and friends

- We ask that your friends or family not visit you during your first semester so that you have time to fully adjust to your new environment. Typically, visits may be arranged only in the last quarter of the program in order to make sure that you have had time to fully adjust to your new environment. Entertaining visitors from home early in your program will interfere with your normal adjustment process.
- Visits must take place during your school breaks when you are home from school, because friends and family will not be allowed to attend school with you.
- Visits are not allowed during the major holidays in order to be considerate to your host family, who may be traveling or may be hosting other visitors at those times.
- Visitors cannot stay with you at your host family's or guardian's house.
- Since visits can be disruptive to your schedule and studies, we ask that visits from relatives or friends not last more than 3-4 days.

Cultural Learning

Living with a new family will give you many insights to how Americans think and act. This is an ideal time for you to do some cultural learning as you compare your culture to American culture. Remember that just because one culture does something a certain way, does not make it better, just different.

Changing Host Families

Changing families in the middle of the school year is generally not allowed. If problems arise, every effort is made to resolve the situation. There are only a few reasons for changing families mid-year, including:

- [Unavoidable Problems] Your host family may no longer be able to host you because of a move, serious financial difficulties, a death, or another significant change in the family.
- [Irresolvable Problems] An irresolvable problem between you and your host family may develop because of cases of harassment, abuse, neglect, or extreme discipline issues. If you experience difficulties with your host family, please have an honest and open conversation with them to see if it can be resolved. If you are not comfortable discussing it with them, please come talk to an ISS staff member. In case of harassment or abuse, please notify ISS immediately.

Section 12: Social Life

School Involvement

Why get involved?

Getting involved is important for many reasons.

- It will help you adjust to the culture and life in America.
- It will help you make friends, and more importantly, being involved in extracurricular activities looks good on college entrance applications.
- It will show your hosts that you desire to be involved in CCS.
- It will be a great way for you to have fun during your time in America!

How to get involved?

School involvement will mean not only participating as an academic student in the classroom and completing homework assignments; it will mean participating in other aspects of school life as well. For instance:

- Participate in a school play
- Join the school choir
- Go on class field trips
- Show school pride during spirit week
- Become a part of our student body council

Volunteering

There may be many volunteer opportunities at your school. Choose a few of these school activities to be involved in. Choose activities that match your gifts, talents, but also consider activities that you would never have done at home.

- Lion's Club
- Community service projects, food drives for the needy, cleaning public parks, etc.
- Help with school functions
- If you play a musical instrument, volunteer to play for school chapels

Social Life

Friendship

U.S. High School students view their high school years as a time for socializing as well as a time for studying. Therefore, they see many situations to make friends and often express a friendly manner, by smiling, saying "hello" or "hi," and chatting. Despite this outward friendliness, U.S. citizens do not make close friends quickly, and generally only have three or four intimate friends and many acquaintances. Do not feel unwelcome if a U.S. citizen is slow to show you deep friendship; this is something that may take more time than you are used to.

Although we do not physically touch each other as much as people from other countries do, we are also a hug and a touch oriented society. Therefore, do not be surprised if new acquaintances touch your arm, shoulder, or back in greeting or saying good-bye. You will also see what you may consider to be private expressions of affection carried out in public: for example, kissing, holding hands, or hugging.

Dating

Although dating one on one is something you will not be allowed to do unless you are 16 and have both your natural parents permission (in writing) and your host family's permission, there are many group activities you are encouraged to be involved in to make friends with people of both genders.

Section 13: School Culture

Cultural Differences in the Classroom

In many cultures, there is a great difference in status between students and teachers. Students show their respect for their teachers by listening quietly. They do not question what the teacher says. In the United States, it is quite acceptable for students to ask questions and to engage in discussions with the teacher. This is not disrespectful. In fact, teachers view participation in class discussions as a sign of interest in the subject matter.

Things to Note

- If you have a problem with the material presented in class, do not hesitate to see the teacher after class and ask for help. Even if you do not have a problem, it is a good idea to make an effort to get to know your teachers. It gives both of you a chance to get to know each other.
- Your teacher will specify “due dates” for various assignments. These dates are quite firm, and you must hand in your assignment by that date in order to get full credit. If you know that you cannot meet a deadline for an important reason, contact your teacher ahead of time and try to work out an arrangement that is mutually agreeable.
- The most important thing you can do to improve your level of success in the classroom is to improve your English skills. *Your English will not improve if the only people you talk to outside the classroom speak your native language.* You have to speak to Americans whenever possible, watch television, listen to the radio, and read newspapers and magazines. Interacting with U.S. culture will greatly enhance your ability to understand your colleagues and teachers on the academic level.

Values in American Education

The following values greatly affect the American academic environment:

- Active classroom participation is expected.
- Time pressure is high, and time management is an important skill to develop.
- Critical thinking must be developed.
- Independent thinking is highly valued.
- Presenting ideas articulately in class is expected.
- Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous.
- Competition is a normal part of most students’ thinking.
- Achievement and hard work are highly valued: the finished product is most important.
- Equality – all students should be treated equally.
- Informality is normal.
- Direct and straightforward communication is expected.
- Friendship is usually based on doing things in common – sports, studying etc.
- Combining theory and practice - the practical application of ideas is emphasized.
- Problem – solving orientation – “If it’s broken, we ought to be able to fix it.”
- The scientific method and the use of logical proof are emphasized academically.

Sports

You may be eligible to participate in school sports. See the CCS Sports Manual for details.

Graduation

Attendance at CCS does not guarantee that you can graduate and receive a diploma from CCS. In general, if you attend CCS for only one year, you will not fulfill its graduation requirements. Frequently, classes and credit from your school at home do not transfer directly over as classes and credits that are required for graduation from CCS. However, if you choose to attend CCS for consecutive years, it is more likely that you will be able to meet graduation requirements. If you desire to graduate from CCS, and it is possible to do so, you need to find out this information as early as possible so that CCS and our college counselor can help facilitate the process.

Section 14: Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity

In the United States, education institutions are very concerned with maintaining strict standards of behavior when it comes to learning. Students are expected to have a real interest in their education. It is okay for students to seek help when having trouble with studying or homework, but to have others do all or some of their work for them is not acceptable. Also, students may choose to copy the work of others in an effort to save time or effort. These are all serious violations of school standards of academic integrity. Even knowing about a violation and not reporting it to your teacher is a violation.

Importance of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is just as important as any other aspect of your life as an international student. Many countries maintain standards of academic integrity that are different than those in the United States. As one of the leading nations for research, here it is important to know and follow the standards used in the U.S.

As international students, academic integrity violations may have more serious results for you than for other students. Failure to follow academic integrity guidelines may result in expulsion from school, or even difficulties with your legal immigration status.

Types of Academic Misconduct

Here are several common types of academic misconduct that you should be aware of are:

- Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication - Making up data or results, and recording or reporting them, submitting fabricated documents.
- Falsification - Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- Multiple Submissions - Submitting substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor of the class for which the student submits the work.
- Complicity - Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- Plagiarism - The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Preventing Academic Misconduct

To avoid the hassles and embarrassment of being accused of academic misconduct, familiarize yourself with the available resources for proper studying, researching, and writing. Your teachers can give you more guidance in this area.

Section 15: Community Life

Community Involvement

Besides getting involved with your host family/guardian and school, another important way to experience life in America is to get involved with the community. There are many fun ways to do that!

- Visit local tourist attractions with your guardian or with new friends
- Take a walk in a local park
- Volunteer at community events
- Go to the local library
- Attend a local faire or festival (most cities have a calendar of community events on their websites)
- Meet your new neighbors

Religion & Church

The United States has a very diverse religious culture. There are many religions co-existing together. You may have very different religious beliefs and practices than your host family or even people at school. It is important to remember to be tolerant and accepting of other religions and those that practice them.

In addition, keep in mind that the people around you may not know a lot about the religion that you may practice, so be patient and understanding of them. If you would like to attend services for your religion that differ from your host family's, please discuss with them how transportation arrangements may be made for you to do so.

However, you are encouraged to attend church with your host family/guardian, as this is an integral part of American Culture. You will meet new people as you take part in church-sponsored activities. Many churches have youth group meetings, activities, and special events geared toward your age group. Participation will allow you to see another aspect of American culture and will expose you to new people and experiences.

Occasional Employment

Although international students cannot get full-time or part-time jobs because of their visas, occasional short-term employment is permitted. Jobs such as babysitting or yard work fall under this category.

News & Information

Now that you have lived in another country other than your own, you are more globally aware than others who have not. It is important to continue your global awareness and know what is going on in the world. There are several great ways to do that, including utilizing the numerous sources for international news on cable television and the Internet.

- MSNBC
- CNN, Bloomsburg and Fox News Channel provide 24-hour news service
- International Channel shows news and other programs broadcasted from other countries. You may be able to view the same programs being broadcast in your home country, in your own language.
- Numerous publications are found on the Internet.

Section 16: Emergencies

In an Emergency

What is an Emergency?

- An emergency is a sudden or unforeseen crisis (usually involving danger) that requires immediate action. An emergency is also a situation, which poses an immediate risk to health, life, property or environment. Most emergencies require urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation, although in some situations, this may not be possible.
- Any serious medical problem (chest pain, seizure, bleeding)
- Any type of fire (business, car, building)
- Any life-threatening situations (fights, people with weapons, etc.)

What is 911?

The United States has decided to use the telephone number 911 for emergency response services. This number may be dialed for free from any telephone when an emergency response is required. 911 is the number to dial for the fastest possible emergency response when you need emergency POLICE, FIRE or MEDICAL ASSISTANCE in a life or death situation.

When to call 911?

You should call 911 in any of the following situations:

- To report something which requires a police officer to come (such as someone being attacked or someone being robbed)
- To get an ambulance for emergency medical help
- To report a fire
- To report a crime in progress
- To report unusual or criminal activity (e.g. alarms, gun shots fired, shouts for help, sounds of glass breaking, unfamiliar persons carrying items from a house).
- When you are not sure, call & let trained personnel decide
- Be familiar with your area. 911 can't help if you don't know where you are.
- Always listen to the Dispatcher and remain on the line until told to hang up. The operator may need more information or to give you further instructions.
- NEVER intervene in a crime in progress.
- Do not dial 911 and hang-up before speaking to 911. If you do, you will be called back and a police car may be sent to your home.

Remember: If you become a victim, remain calm, comply with their demands, be attentive to details, and call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so. Dial 911 when off campus or using a cell phone.

Abuse & Harassment

Abuse and harassment are very real and serious issues. Your safety and security are our highest priority, so we want to do everything possible to ensure that your experience is free of abuse and harassment. One thing that we will do is to thoroughly screen your host family to ensure that you are placed in a loving and healthy environment. We will also be available to you in case problems do arise.

If harassment happens:

- Call the police immediately to report the crime. Try to remember as much as possible about the person/people, the vehicle, and the location. If you are in immediate danger dial the emergency number.
- If you do not report the crime, police authorities cannot prevent future occurrences.

Section 17: Safety

At Home

- Check with your Host Parents/Guardians to determine if your personal belongings are covered under their policy against perils such as fire, theft, or vandalism.
- Ask your guardians to help you familiarize yourself with household appliances and make sure that you know how to properly use and take care of them.
- Ask your guardians to keep emergency numbers easy to reach so that you have them nearby and readily accessible.
- Keep doors locked at all times, while you are home or away.
- Keep all the doors and windows locked.
- Before answering the door, check to see who is there. If you do not know who it is, do not open the door for them.

In Public Places

- Do not leave your valuables unattended. Either carry them with you at all times or put them in a locker.
- When carrying a purse, keep it closed and carry it near your body.
- Do not leave personal beverages unattended. If you happen to (even just to use the restroom) get another one.
- Avoid walking alone when it is dark outside. Walk in well-lit areas even if it makes the trip longer.
- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings at all times. Be attentive of the people around you. If someone is following you, head towards a well lit area with more people.
- If someone in a vehicle talks to you, stay far enough away to avoid being grabbed.
- Always carry a cell phone with you or enough change to make a pay phone call in the event of an emergency.

In Your Personal Finances

- Use caution in giving personal information over the telephone or the Internet.
- Shred documents containing personal information (address, ID numbers, phone number, etc.) before putting them in the trash.
- Report missing cards promptly.

Section 18: Travel

Domestic Travel

For day trips with approved organizations or with a friend's family

- You must obtain written permission from your parents and your host parents.
- You must submit written permission from your parents to International Student Services, which includes the dates, times, and places of travel.
- Be aware of all the responsibilities involved in traveling, including the costs that you will be expected to cover.
- You will not be allowed to travel independently.
- Travel should not interfere with normal school attendance. It should take place over weekends or during school holidays.
- When you are traveling with your host family or CCS staff for a program or school-sponsored trip within the United States, you simply need to ISS staff know the dates and times you will be away and where you will be going, as well as get the appropriate permission slip signed by your host family or dorm parents.

Visits to Relatives or Family Friends

- Because it is important for you have an uninterrupted time of transition into life in America, you will not be granted permission to go visit relatives or friends until you have been in the States for at least 5 months.
- No independent travel will be allowed until you have been in the States for at least 5 months.
- All permissions to travel will be considered on a case-by-case basis by ISS Staff. We reserve the right to deny permission for a visit if we feel you are having adjustment or other support problems, you are struggling to keep up in your classes, or if you have exhibited behavior unsuitable for a CCS student.
- All visits must be approved by ISS staff, your host family/guardian, and your natural parents.

International Travel

For approved trips by ISS staff, host parents/guardians, and natural parents:

- Be sure to check the U.S. government regulations with regards to your visa and appropriate documentation to regain entry into the States. Please remember that just because you have a visa, it does not guarantee you reentry into the States.
- You should check with the school registrar to make sure your visa is current and to make sure your paperwork is in order before you leave the country.
- The school will not be held responsible for getting you in and out of the States.
- As domestic travel, international travel should not interfere with normal school attendance. It should take place during major school holidays (ex. Winter Break).
- You and your parents should consider the risks, costs, and responsibilities involved in traveling internationally.
- You will only be allowed to travel independently if you are going directly back to your home country.

Section 19: Departure

Goodbyes

Saying goodbye in the States is just as important as when you left your home country. You will have made many new friends including teachers, fellow students, and your host family.

Some ways to say goodbye well:

- Give little gifts that you brought from home.
- Write thank you notes to teachers, friends, and your host family/guardian to express your gratitude.
- Cook a meal from your home country for your guardians.
- Have lunch with a teacher and tell the teacher about the impact that he or she has had on you during your time at CCS.
- Let people know that you are leaving; do not simply disappear out of their lives. Let them know how they can stay in contact with you.
- You can also invite some to come visit you in your home country.
- Some friends and families may have going-away parties for you; others may say their good-byes more informally and personally.

Packing

Packing to leave can be a very stressful and emotional process. Since you are more than likely to have much more things to pack up than what you arrived with, you should begin packing at least 2-3 weeks before your actual departure date. If you cannot fit everything into your suitcase, you will need to ship some items home. As courtesy to your guardians, do not leave this to the last minute AND do not leave it for them to ship. Shipping items home is your responsibility.

Please refer to the TSA website www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/index.shtm for details about packing and luggage restrictions.

Section 20: Re-entry

Re-entry Stress

Definition

Re-entry stress is like culture stress in many ways - only in reverse. While culture stress is associated with a sense of disorientation brought on by a new and unfamiliar environment, re-entry stress is precipitated by returning to a setting you presume to be familiar, but which in reality is no longer the same.

It is the unexpected nature and subtlety of such change that will cause stress for you. Your once familiar and comfortable environment no longer appears the same. Something definitely has changed. But you don't easily recognize just what has been altered.

Suddenly you find yourself out of phase with your own culture. Your reaction may come in the form of bewilderment, dismay, and disillusionment and perhaps even irritation or anger. Somehow, "things are just not the way they used to be...", "nobody seems to care...", "Nobody really understands...".

Causes

There are several contributing factors to re-entry stress. One is that you are being caught by surprise - you do not anticipate change and consequently are unprepared to cope. Another factor is value conflict. Your values, once taken for granted and even highly cherished, now seem of lesser significance or of little importance at all. Your way of thinking, your manner and your responses to many situations have been changing. Often these changes are not apparent until you are back in your own culture.

Common Symptoms and Effects of Re-entry Stress

- Disorientation - feeling out of place, not fitting in
- Feelings of loneliness, isolation, or being lost in the crowd
- Restlessness - a desire to "get away" from those who don't seem to understand or care
- Feeling that nobody understands your experience or that nobody cares
- Feeling tired, listless
- Critical attitude toward home country - its waste, extravagance, wrong way of doing things, etc.
- Loss of identity - just "another cog in a big wheel"
- Inability to communicate new ideas, concepts freely
- Feeling of superiority - standing aloof from others because of your overseas experience
- Feeling of dissatisfaction
- Defensive in responses
- Retreat, withdrawal, lack of concern
- Unnatural, uncomfortable responses to "ordinary" situations
- Confusion over conflicting attitudes and responses
- Rejection of overseas experiences or a desire to forget and not talk about them

How to Cope with Reentry Stress

- Expect some of the same areas of culture stress as you experienced when you first came to the United States. Allocate time and energy to cope with these.
- Realize the importance of balancing between readjustments and maintaining new values.
- Consciously apply what you've learned about the U.S., the world, and different cultures to your home culture.
- Find a network of people who have been overseas with whom you can discuss the needs of the world and your experiences.

- Cultivate friendships with people from the region where you lived (Ex: international students and businessmen)
- Help your friends and family know what questions to ask you. Try to look at your experience from their context.
- When you want to talk about your overseas experience more than they want to hear, put your message in “I need” frames: “I need to work through this”. Often they will listen, not because they care about your information but because they care about you.
- From the beginning of your time overseas, keep records that will help you talk and write to people back home. Record your first impressions in detail. Record anecdotes periodically. Now and then, reflect on what you are learning in light of the context in which you will have to report back home.

Evaluation

It will take time to adjust to being back at home. Places and people that seemed so familiar before you left, now seem strange and unfamiliar to you. You may feel like an alien in your own home. You may feel that no one understands you. Don't worry. Feelings like these are normal. It is important to evaluate and think about your time overseas in order to help you integrate your study abroad program into your life. See the Re-entry Exercises in the Resource section for some important exercises that will help in your transition.

Section 21: Resources

Books about American culture:

Althen, Gary, Amanda R. Doran, and Susan J. Szmania. 2002. *American ways: A guide for foreigners in the United States*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press. This book will provide you with insights into how Americans think. It explores American values, assumptions, and ways of reasoning.

Asitimbay, Diane. 2004. *What's up America? A foreigner's guide to understanding Americans*. San Diego, CA: Culturelink Press. This book is specifically geared toward international students who have questions about Americans, and it will provide answers to many of your questions. It also contains interesting drawings and descriptions. This book also compares some American habits with Korean, Japanese, and European customs.

Kieffer, Jarold A. 1998. *What are those crazy Americans saying? An easy way to understand thousands of American expressions*. 3rd ed. SI R Publishing. The book is designed to help nonnative English speakers who may be confused by American English slang and idiom expressions. The book focuses on the meaning of 7,000 American expressions.

Lanier, Allison R. 2005. *Living in the U.S.A.* 6th ed. Rev. by Jef C. Davis. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. This is a guide to surviving and thriving in the United States.

Min, Byoung-Chul. 2005. *Ugly Koreans, ugly Americans: Cultural and behavioral differences between Koreans and Americans*. Seoul, Korea: BCM Media, Inc. This book presents the differences between Koreans and Americans in a humorous way. The text is in Korean and English.

Books about crossing cultures:

Hansel, Bettina. 2007. *The exchange student survival kit*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press. This book was written specifically to help students understand better the unique experience of international exchange programs and to avoid many of the common misunderstandings and problems that may occur.

Storti, Craig. 2001. *The art of crossing cultures*. 2nd ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. This is a more academic book that focuses on how to deal with country shock and culture shock. It includes many examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings, often called intercultural incidents.

Websites:

CCS website: www.CCS-rams.org

This website will provide you with all the essential information about the school. Here you will be able to find photos, upcoming events, and links to other important school and church ministries.

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/travel

This website provides information to assist travelers and their healthcare providers in deciding the vaccines, medications, and measures necessary to prepare for international travel.

Travel Document Systems (TDS): www.traveldocs.com/visas.htm

TDS provides expedited visa processing for US citizens traveling to countries that require an entry visa. TDS can also assist Canadians traveling to countries that have no diplomatic representation in Canada, and it can help US permanent residents of other nationalities obtain visas for many countries.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement]

www.ice.gov/sevis/students/index.htm

This website contains lots of useful information including arrival tips for international students

(translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish), immigration documents, and information on how to maintain your nonimmigrant status. It also provides links to many other U.S. Department of Homeland Security websites.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration]

www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm

This website will give you information about air travel security regulations. For instance, it contains a list of items that cannot be carried on board an aircraft in the United States. It also gives regulations about packing liquids in your carry-on luggage.

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs: www.travel.state.gov

This website provides international travel information for US. citizens, passport information for U.S. citizens, and visa information for foreign citizens.

California Tourism www.visitcalifornia.com

This website provides information on tourism in California

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Appendix I

Checklist for Students

Pre-Departure Planning

- I have compared ticket prices offered by travel agents, student agencies and websites.
- I have a valid passport and visa.
- I have made multiple copies of all important travel documents.

How Foreign Laws Apply to You

- I am familiar with the basic social laws of the countries to which I will be traveling, including laws related to drug and alcohol use.
- I am familiar with how the legal system works in the U.S.
- I know the location of my home country's Embassy in the U.S.
- I have proper insurance (or will be signed up for insurance through the school) and a personal lawyer in case I should need legal counsel.

Methods of Communication While Abroad

- I know all the important telephone and fax numbers and address for ISS and CCS, including emergency after-hours numbers.
- I know the address and telephone number for my new host parents.
- I know how my calling card plan works and how to use my card to call home.
- I know where to buy a cell phone abroad in case I need one.
- I have created an internationally accessible e-mail account address.
- All of my emergency contacts both in the U.S. and abroad have all of my contact information, and I have theirs.
- I know how the mail service operates abroad (efficiency, costs, etc.) and what to expect when mailing items.
- I have a list of everyone to whom I have given out my contact information.
- I have asked those to whom I have given my address to tell me before they mail me anything.

Packing

- I know how much luggage my airline allows me to check and to take on board my flight.
- I know what my airline permits me to carry in my carry-on.
- I have researched the weather conditions over various seasons in the region of my host country where I will be.
- I remembered to pack all important travel documents in my carry-on, not my checked bags.
- I made a list of items I intend to purchase once I arrive abroad, rather than pack them.
- I made an itemized list of everything I packed in my suitcases in case they are lost or stolen and I need to make an insurance claim.
- If I have decided to ship some items, I have contacted someone in my host country to insure pick-up and/or payment for these items upon arrival.

Expectations

- I know I will have to adapt my routine and schedule to life abroad.
- I have researched what the general quality of facilities like hospitals, restaurants, public transportation, payphones, etc. is like abroad.

- I know what modern conveniences my host country offers (i.e. internet hookups, supermarket chains, name brand stores, microwaves, cell phone service, heated classrooms, etc.).

Medical Care and Insurance

- I know what my insurance policy does and does not cover.
- I have an emergency contact in my home country and abroad.
- I have a first aid kit.
- I know how to refill needed prescriptions abroad.

Basic Health and Safety

- Before leaving, I have gotten a complete physical from my doctor.
- I have received all necessary immunizations required/recommended for entry to the U.S., and I know where to obtain other inoculations in the U.S. if needed later.
- I know who the emergency contact will be in America.
- I know who my emergency contact will be at home.
- I have researched where to buy food that suits my dietary needs/restrictions (i.e. for vegetarians, diabetics, etc...)
- I know how extensive, safe and reliable the public transportation system is in the U.S.
- I am aware of the laws and codes of conduct that are likely to impact me.
- I understand that the use of alcohol and drugs increases my risk of accident and injury.

Risk Factors and Strategies to Reduce Risk

- I know which non-verbal behaviors are considered inappropriate/rude and which are commonly used (certain hand gestures, greeting by bowing, kissing or shaking hands, etc.).
- I know which areas are considered unsafe in the cities I will be living.
- I know which forms of public transportation are safest to use.
- I know where to get help if I need it.
- I have a small flashlight to carry with me at night.
- I have only given out my mailing address to people I know, and those people will inform me before they send me any mail/packages.
- I am aware of the prevailing local attitudes towards, and local laws dealing with, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Crisis Management

- In the event of serious injury or death, I have made my wishes clear to family in my home country, and to my program director abroad.
- I am aware of what my school, the Embassy and the Consulate can and cannot do to assist me in the event of a crisis.
- I have been provided with comprehensive information from my program, and I have shared this information with parents/guardians/family members.
- I have more than one way to keep in touch with home while abroad (i.e. through e-mail, calling card, fax, etc...)
- I know which active steps I will take in a crisis in order to make myself feel calmer and safer.
- I recognize the fact that I may experience emotional side-effects from crisis, and that my

emotional responses to crisis are normal.

Adjustments and Culture Shock

- I am already familiar with some major cultural differences between home and the United States (i.e.: religion, language, laws).
- I understand that it is normal to experience culture shock, including feelings of anxiety, depression and frustration.
- If my depression does not go away, I know where to get help (i.e.: a student counselor).
- I expect to have both good days and bad when learning to overcome my culture shock, and I will be patient with myself as I learn to adapt.
- I know that I am not alone in how I feel.
- I will try not to be negative or overly critical of American culture. Instead, I will look for the positives that American culture possesses.
- I will make an effort to meet and make friends with Americans rather than just hanging around other people from my country.
- Upon return home, I will be patient with myself again as I experience reverse culture shock. (This includes trying not to be overly critical of my home country just because being home is not like being abroad.)

Airport Safety, Duties and Customs

- I have all of my identification and travel documents in an assessable, yet secure, location.
- I did not accept anything from anyone before boarding my flight.
- I packed my bags myself and know exactly what's in them.
- My bags never left my sight or supervision before they were checked in.
- I filled out all necessary declaration forms.
- I was honest in declaring everything I am bringing into or out of the U.S.
- I was careful to avoid carrying any item that be considered illegal in the U.S. or may cause me to be suspected of smuggling.

Reverse Culture Shock

- I understand that it is normal to experience reverse culture shock, including feelings of anxiety, depression and frustration towards home and the United States.
- If my depression does not go away, I know where to get help (i.e.: a student counselor)?
- I expect to have both good days and bad when learning to overcome my reverse culture shock, and I will be patient with myself as I learn to adapt back to life in my home country.
- I know that I am not alone in how I feel.
- Upon return home, I will be patient with myself again as I experience reverse culture shock. (This includes trying not to be overly critical of my home country just because being home is not like being abroad.)

[Adapted from Studentsabroad.com]

Appendix II
Re-entry Exercises

A. "Moving On" Exercise

Please complete this exercise during the last week of your time in the U.S. Complete the following sentences with your own words. You may write whatever comes to mind. You may want to use another sheet of paper for space to write full answers.

LEAVING

1. When I think of leaving my host country, I feel _____
2. My experience here has been _____
3. For me the U.S. means _____
4. The people I will miss are _____
5. The things that I will miss are _____
6. The things I will be happy to leave behind are _____
7. When leaving a place I usually _____
8. The easiest point of leaving for me will be _____
9. Before I leave I really want to _____
10. I feel that my goals/expectations have been _____
11. The most stressful part of leaving will be _____

EXPECTATIONS

1. I expect that the process of returning will be _____
2. I expect the reception from my family will be _____
3. I expect the reception from my friends will be _____
4. I think my family will expect me to _____
5. I think my friends at home will expect me to _____
6. If my plans do not work out I will _____

RETURNING

1. When I think of returning to my home country, I feel _____
2. I will be going back to _____
3. Regarding money, I will be _____
4. Going back will enable me to _____
5. I think the hardest part of going back for me will be _____
6. I think the easiest part of going back for me will be _____
7. I am really looking forward to _____

B. DEBRIEFING

Debriefing triggers the re-entry process. Re-entry can be seen as an end and a beginning.

- An end to a foreign experience, but the beginning of feeling foreign to your own culture.
- An end to being stared at, but the beginning of looking at people and the world through different eyes.
- An end to simple living, but the beginning of a different lifestyle.
- An end to eating foreign food, but the beginning of friendships with "foreign" people.

C. "Settling Back In" Exercise

(To be completed 1-2 months after returning home) Complete the following sentences with your own words. You may write whatever comes to mind. You may want to use another sheet of paper for space to write full answers.

1. Now that I am back home, I feel _____
2. I find it easy to _____
3. I find it hard to _____
4. I wish _____
5. The people who I feel understand me are _____
6. I enjoy being with _____
7. I enjoy (activity) _____
8. My family says I _____
9. My friends say I _____
10. I need help in _____

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Appendix III

Questions to ask your Host Family

1. What do I call you?
2. What am I expected to do daily other than make my bed, always keep my room tidy, and clean the bathroom every time I use it?
3. What is the procedure for dirty clothes?
4. Where do I keep clothes until wash day?
5. Should I wash my own clothes and underclothes?
6. Should I iron my own clothes?
7. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine at any time?
8. When is a convenient time for me to take a shower/bath (a.m. or p.m.)?
9. Where may I keep my toiletries?
10. May I use the family's bathroom toiletries (toothpaste, soap, etc), or am I responsible to purchase my own?
11. What time will meals be served?
12. What can I do to assist at mealtimes (help prepare meals, set the table, wash dishes, empty garbage)?
13. May I help myself to food and drink any time or should I ask first?
14. What areas of the house are strictly private (parents' bedroom, study/office)?
15. May I put pictures or posters in my room?
16. May I rearrange my bedroom?
17. What are your rules for me with regard to alcohol and smoking?
18. Where can I store my suitcases?
19. What time must I get up (on weekdays, on weekends)?
20. What time must I go to bed (on school nights, on weekends)?
21. What are the rules for going out at night and at what time must I be home? Can exceptions be made if I ask in advance?
22. May I have friends spend the night or visit during the day?
23. What are the rules about me using the telephone? Must I ask first?
24. May my friends call me?
25. May I call my friends?
26. May I make long-distance calls (overseas and within the country)?
27. How do you want me to keep track of the costs of my telephone calls?
28. What is the procedure for mailing letters? What address do I use for my incoming mail?
29. Do you have any dislikes, such as chewing gum, wearing a hat at the table, loud rock music, or smoking?
30. Do my host brothers or sisters have any dislikes?
31. What are the dates of your birthdays?
32. What are the transportation arrangements (car, bus, bike, walking, etc.)?
33. May I use the stereo, TV, computer, etc, at any time?
34. Are there restrictions on computer, email and Internet use?
35. What are the rules about attending religious services?
36. Would you like me to phone home if I will be more than 10 minutes late? 20 minutes late? 30 minutes late?
37. When we go out as a family, should I pay for my own entrance fee, meals, etc.?
38. What arrangements should I make for school lunch?
39. What else can I do around the house to help out (yard work, help clean, babysit)?
40. Is there anything else you would like me to know?