

welcome!

You've made it! You've embarked on what will probably be one of the greatest experiences of your entire life. As a CIEE student, you'll find that your time in the USA is filled with ups and downs, good times and not-so-good times, easy times and difficult times. All combined, you'll end up with quite an education — you learn about another culture, pick up a second language, make new friends, find a new favorite food, change your outlook on the world..... the list is endless. But, most importantly, you learn more about yourself and improve your own "life skills" and, we hope, have some fun along the way!

You've taken a big step in leaving all that is familiar — your friends and family and the comforts of being in a place where everything makes sense to you. You probably feel like you've left the earth and landed on Mars! While here on this new planet, you'll no doubt run into some times when you just can't believe you've embarked on this wild and crazy journey. Don't panic! It's normal, and we're here to help you. We've got loads of advice and we don't mind listening when you need to talk about stuff like being homesick, having a tough time making friends, etc.

We'd like to hear about your experiences! Send in your letters, stories, poems, photos - anything you'd like to share in our newsletter, World News. Send to our address listed on the last page or to highschool@ciee.org, and don't forget to check out CIEE High, the website for USA High School Program students! It's at www.ciee.org/usahs/councilhigh

Once again, a very warm welcome to the CIEE family. We are proud to have you as a part of our program and we wish you the very best as you embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

ciee



Join the CIEE online community! As a member of CIEE's USA High School Program, you are already enrolled in our online community for CIEE students.

Visit the site today and:

- read news about CIEE students
- get study tips and advice
- download Community Project forms and other documents
- ask questions and get help and much, much more!

To join in go to www.ciee.org/usahs/councilhigh
If you have problems logging on, contact us at: highschool@ciee.org

We'll see you there!

CIEE provides this website as a resource to all USA High School Program students. It's a great place to share ideas, get advice, and be in touch with other CIEE students. While it can be tempting to spend a lot of time online, especially with other CIEE students and your own family back home, you should always ask your host family for permission to use the internet, and discuss time restrictions. Avoid constant contact with home - it only ends up making you more homesick. As we say, it'll cause you to "have one foot in the USA and the other in your home country." If you need more tips on homesickness and how to avoid it, contact your Local Coordinator, use the resources of this website or e-mail us at: highschool@ciee.org

Important Information

ciee contact information

your local coordinator

your high school

insurance

policy

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CIEE
USA High School Program
300 Fore Street, Portland, ME 04101

Telephone: (800) 448-9944 or (207) 553-7600
Fax: (207) 553-7699
E-Mail: highschool@ciee.org

Regular office hours are Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm EST.

Twenty-four hour emergency service is available.
CIEE Emergency Number: (866) 736-5641

MY LOCAL COORDINATOR

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail Address _____

MY HIGH SCHOOL

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

INSURANCE POLICY

Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

Telephone _____

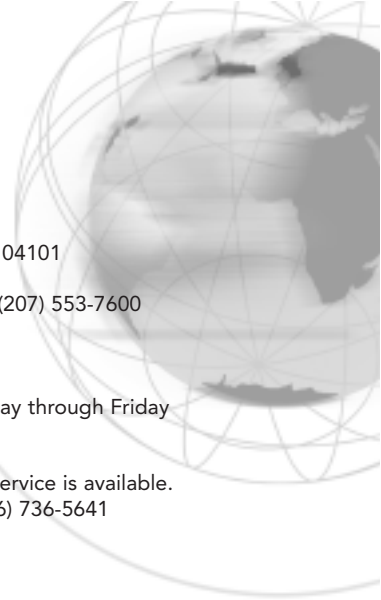


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orientation meetings

Depending on what part of the world you are coming from, you will attend an orientation in New York, California, or Washington DC. These orientations are intended to welcome you to the United States and to the USA High School Program and to prepare you for your semester or year ahead. Students stay in hotels and share rooms with other exchange students. During the orientation you will meet some of the USA High School Program staff, a few Local Coordinators and a large number of exchange students like yourself from all over the world!

A large portion of the orientation is devoted to group discussions led by CIEE staff. You will be given information about what to expect upon arrival in your host community, tips for making friends, and ideas on how to solve a problem when one arises. The group leaders will encourage role-playing and will attempt to get each student involved in the discussions. Most students arrive at orientation excited and eager to move on to his or her host family, but often find themselves nervous as the departure day gets closer. This is a good opportunity to talk about your fears and your expectations.

The orientations are also a lot of fun. There are tours of the city and meals in restaurants. Social events are planned so that students are able to meet each other and spend time getting to know other exchange students.

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Family Life in the US

Why does a family decide to host an exchange student? There are perhaps as many answers to this question as there are families who host. The main reasons most families say they choose to host an exchange student are:

- The family views hosting as a special way for them to help a young person achieve a goal.
- The family has a special interest in another country or region of the world because of family ties or because of current or past study of the language or area.
- The family is proud of the United States and wishes to share their lifestyle and culture with others.

Whatever their reason, all of CIEE's host families are volunteers. They receive no money or other compensation for hosting. They do it out of a sincere desire to do something good!



types of families

American host families come in all shapes and sizes. Many host families consist of a mother, father and their children all living at home together. Some of these families may include step-parents or step-siblings, some of whom may not live in the home but who visit/are visited on weekends or at other intervals. These families may be very busy and may run their household in a structured manner. Their children may be able to introduce the exchange student to other teens, or the children may be much younger and eager for the attention of their new older "sister" or "brother". Communication and cooperation are especially important for successful integration into family life.

Some host families have children who are grown up and no longer live at home. The children may live in the same town or in a nearby town; however, it is not uncommon for a family's children to move far away from their parents. Other host families may simply consist of a husband and wife who do not have children, or a single parent with children. On certain occasions, and with special permission from the student and his/her natural parents, a host family may consist of a single adult who has special opportunities to offer an exchange student. These types of families may offer slightly more individual attention to the exchange student; however, the student may find it necessary to be more assertive when it comes to making friends.

What do all of these types of families have in common? They are all able to provide, in their individual ways, a loving and supportive environment and their own, unique perspectives about life in America.

household rules & regulations

Every family has its own household routine and expectations regarding the responsibilities and behavior of each family member. Parents do require their children, including their "exchange children", to always seek permission before going out with friends or to an unsupervised activity. They require advanced knowledge of whom their children are with and what they will be doing before they permit the child to participate. This is especially true with their "exchange children". Host families take their responsibilities seriously and know that the natural parents and CIEE staff are relying on them as the primary caregiver and protector of the exchange student. They may be extra cautious and protective until they get to know you personally and begin to meet and trust your friends.

chores

American children frequently are given chores (housework) that they are responsible for. Such chores are considered part of routine daily life. CIEE encourages host families to treat their exchange student as they would treat their own child, including the assignment of chores. Your host family may ask you to simply keep your room clean or they may ask more, such as helping with dishes, vacuuming the house, cleaning the bathroom, etc. We ask the host families to divide the work fairly between family members and the exchange student.

If you are unaccustomed to helping with cleaning a house, then pay careful attention to the instructions your host family gives you. Ask them to show you where cleaning supplies are kept, which supplies are used for the chores you must do, and if necessary, how the chore should be done. After one or two tries, you should be able to do a good job without help. Understand when the chores must be done, and do not wait to be asked to do them.



curfew

Parents usually have an established curfew (a time at night before which you are expected to return home) for their children. You will be expected to abide by the curfew too. Curfews vary from family to family and even from town to town. A curfew is set with your safety in mind. It may be different on weekdays and on weekends. Plan your activities so that you will always "make curfew" (be home on time). If you think you will be late for curfew, always call your host family and tell them you will be late. While it may not excuse you from consequences, it will alleviate their worry and anxiety, and possibly prevent an angry confrontation upon your return.

household discipline

As mentioned previously, CIEE has asked host families to treat their exchange student as they would treat their own child. This includes enforcing the house rules, which, if broken, may have consequences. Punishments for being late for curfew, abusing phone privileges, or not doing chores may result in "grounding" (restricting the student from certain activities or associating with certain people) or being given added chores for a period of time. These are only typical examples of common punishments. Your host parents are free to enact any reasonable consequence appropriate to the offense.

hygiene

Every culture has different standards regarding what is considered "clean". For example, bathing once a week may be considered socially acceptable in one country, but in America it would be considered dirty and offensive. In the United States people normally bathe daily or possibly every two days, depending on the person's level of activity. This, in addition to shampooing hair and washing clothes frequently, allows people to remain free from body odor which Americans find offensive. Despite their strong feelings on the subject, however, Americans are embarrassed to talk about such things, and they may not say anything to you until they cannot tolerate it any longer. Instead, they will probably avoid being near you. To prevent this problem, always bathe regularly and shampoo, wash your clothes often, and use personal hygiene products such as deodorant daily.

the internet

The Internet can be a great tool for finding information, for entertainment, and most importantly, for staying in touch with family and friends. However, it is important to remember that the use of the Internet at home or at school is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege can create many problems both for you and for your host family. To help you to avoid these problems, we would like to provide some guidelines to you that we want all CIEE participants to follow.

Limit your use of the Internet. If your family has a computer, we strongly recommend that you talk to your host family about when and how often you may use the Internet. When you use the Internet for long periods of time you may tie up the phone line so that no one else in the host family can make or receive calls.

- Depending on the type of Internet account that your family has, you may be running up a very expensive bill.
- The more time that you spend on the Internet chatting to friends and family from home, the less time you are spending on homework or on socializing with family and friends here. You came to the US to experience American culture. You cannot do this successfully if you are spending too much time focused on home.
- If you are homesick, spending a lot of time sending and receiving emails from your home will actually prolong the amount of time that you feel this way.

Be very careful to observe Internet protocol. Internet protocol includes not using obscene language in chat rooms. Avoid sights that say “Caution: must be 18 or over”. These sights include anything related to weapons, violence, or pornography. Even if you are 18, viewing of these sights may make your host family very uncomfortable, not to mention being offensive to their beliefs. Remember — you are an ambassador for your country while you are here, and your actions will influence how people view you and your country.

using the telephone

Some families impose time limits that restrict the amount of time one person uses the phone. You should understand and respect those time limits in an effort to cooperate and respect the needs of others. You may ask your family for assistance to dial local and long distance/international calls as needed. Understand that you alone are responsible for the cost of your phone calls. American telephone companies send monthly bills which show where each phone call was made, the length of the call, and the amount of money each call costs. CIEE recommends that each student use a private telephone calling card or credit card which will bill you directly. Sometimes it is possible to arrange with your host family to pay them immediately for your phone calls once their monthly bill arrives. If this is the arrangement you make with your

host family, do not delay paying your part of the phone bill since it is the host family who will suffer the consequences if the bill is not paid on time.

Students spending too much time on the telephone with friends and family from home often have a difficult time adapting. It is important to remember why you are here and to try to immerse yourself in the experience.

Paying for phone calls is often the largest part of an exchange student’s expenses, but it doesn’t have to be. Limit your calls to an acceptable number per month, and limit the time spent on each call to an acceptable number of minutes. Set an alarm if needed. Letter writing can be a great alternative because it is not only cheaper, but it allows the recipient to read your words again and again, whereas the phone call is finished and gone when you hang up. If e-mail is available, take advantage of this form of communication, but first make sure to ask your host family what the rules are regarding using the computer. Also remember that e-mail may use the phone line, so there may be restrictions as well.

mobile phones

It is becoming more and more common for students to arrive in the United States with their own mobile/cellular phones. Although it is sometimes possible to make international calls using a mobile phone, it is very expensive, and is not recommended.

Many public places (such as: restaurants, libraries, and movie theaters) in the United States do not allow use of mobile phones. Most high schools do not allow mobile phones to be used during school hours.

Be sure to speak with your host family regarding their rules for mobile phones. Although you may not be using your host family’s telephone, you must respect their rules regarding mobile phone use. While it may seem convenient to receive messages and calls from home, a mobile phone can serve as a major distraction to your US exchange experience.

your money

You and your natural parents have worked very hard to send you on this program and to supply you with the spending money you will need. You want to fully enjoy every opportunity that comes along, but you must also think about the cost. As a young person with perhaps a large amount of money, it is tempting to shop often and foolishly. Avoid this by preparing a budget with your natural parents prior to your departure. Ask your host family or Local Coordinator for help. Begin by understanding your required weekly expenses, such as lunches, personal entertainment, school fees, etc. Pay careful attention to the amount of money you



spend so that one day you don't discover suddenly that you no longer have any. Students typically need more money at the beginning of the program for school and activity fees and at the end of the program for domestic plane tickets, gifts, or souvenirs.

If you have to ask for more money from home, do it when you have at least two weeks worth of money remaining. Sending money, even by bank to bank wire transfer, can take up to two weeks. Avoid putting yourself in the position of asking to borrow money from others. Part of this experience is learning to be responsible for yourself and your actions, and budgeting money is part of the process.

planning activities

It is important to involve yourself in your host family's daily activities, which may include visiting relatives, grocery shopping, or possibly weekend or day trips. You should expect to pay for activities such as excursions, movies, and other forms of entertainment (while with host family or friends). Communicate with your host family about upcoming plans or activities which they or you may be planning so that schedules can be arranged and you can save enough money in your budget for these events. Also understand that you may have to decline some opportunities in order to participate in more important ones if your budget is limited.

When planning activities with friends, always seek permission from your host family first and know what your limitations might be (curfew, where you may go, etc.). Do you need transportation? If so, ask your host family well in advance of the activity so that they can tell you if they are able to provide it. If friends routinely drive you places, offer to contribute money to their gasoline expense as a gesture of appreciation on your part.

host siblings

If you have host siblings, sometimes the hardest part of adjusting to a host family's way of life can be getting along with them. Everyone — you, your host family, your Local Coordinator and CIEE — hopes that you and your host siblings (if any) will become fast friends. Most of the time, this is the case. However, sometimes problems occur. Jealousy on their part or yours can cause poor behavior and hurt feelings. Sharing a room can be difficult at times unless both people are fully cooperative and willing to compromise. Younger children may constantly seek your attention, and unless you are accustomed to younger brothers and sisters at home, this may be difficult to adjust to. Instead of getting angry and deciding that you cannot live with it, first try talking to the other person about the problem. If that doesn't help, ask for help from your host parents. Be prepared to make sacrifices and compromises. Remember, conflicts with siblings are natural—both at home and abroad. How you handle the conflicts will make the difference between a good relationship and a bad one.

religion

Your host family may belong to an organized religion and they may (or may not) attend services regularly. While CIEE does not encourage students to convert to a different religion, we do encourage students to at least try attending religious services with their host families. In many communities, church has an important social function as well as a religious function. Most churches have youth groups where exchange students are often successful at making friends, and many churches offer both youth and family activities either after services or on different days of the week. If you try it and decide you are unable to attend because of your own strong personal beliefs, or if you prefer to attend services of your own denomination, speak to your host family about how you can make other arrangements. Regardless, CIEE does not require any student to attend religious services or activities.

illness

You may wonder what to do if you become sick or have an accident. If this happens at home, talk to a host parent right away. They may have non-prescription medication that will help you, or they may decide that you need to see a doctor. If a condition is life threatening or needs urgent attention, you should go to the hospital emergency room immediately.

If you get sick or hurt while at school, ask permission from your teacher to visit the nurse's office. The nurse will then decide whether you can remain at school or if you must return home or see a doctor. There is usually no cost to visit the school nurse, but the school nurse may be limited by what medication he/she can provide to you. Also understand that you are not allowed to leave school because of illness unless the school nurse or your parent approves it first.



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High School in the US

This program, and others like it, would not exist without the generosity of American high schools. Schools choose to host an exchange student because of the diversity it brings to their classrooms. In addition, teachers and administrators often enjoy showing foreign students the American perspective. Since many resources and lots of time goes into teaching foreign students — they expect that in return you will always try your best to do well in your classes, to make friends, and to participate in school activities. They welcome your perspective since that allows other students to learn from your experiences.



school spirit

Some aspects of school life are unique to the American school system. Among them is the concept of school spirit. School spirit is having pride in one's school and its achievements — most notably in the area of sports and other competitions. Typically, "cheerleaders" will lead "pep rallies" which generate excitement for the school's sports teams. Students may be asked to wear clothing in the school colors (which are different for each school) or to bring banners and signs made in the school colors to the sports competitions.

school activities and clubs

Social and sports activities are often organized by clubs and teams at school. There are organized clubs and activities to fit many interests ranging from sports (like American football, soccer, basketball, tennis, volleyball, field hockey etc.) to academic interests (such as the speech/debate team, the school newspaper or foreign language clubs) to social or community service organizations (the International Club, Circle K, or student government). You should attempt to join at least one club during your stay. It's a great way to make friends and really become a part of the school.

school fees

You must pay a fee in order to participate in most activities. The amount varies with each activity. Clubs often ask members to pay a membership fee which is used toward planning club activities. Other fees you can expect to pay, which are associated with school, include your lunches, fees for library books you have returned late and the school yearbook if you want to order one.

guidance counselors

American schools assign guidance counselors for students. In some cases your guidance counselor is the person who helps you register for your classes. He or she is a valuable resource for information at school about such things as school policies, school life, and even activities that may be available to you. Your guidance counselor will monitor your academic progress and speak with you and your teachers if there are problems. If you do have a problem, he or she can help you understand what the problem is and can suggest ways to solve it. The important thing to remember is that you can always ask a guidance counselor for help before a problem becomes too big.

appropriate dress

Most schools do not have strict dress codes, but they do pay attention to what students wear. They expect students to dress respectfully and tastefully without showing too much of their bodies. Schools reserve the right to tell students to return home to change clothes if their dress violates the school's expectations or creates a disturbance in the classroom. Some schools publish strict dress codes which must be followed and other schools require that the students wear uniforms. Always remember that most Americans, especially those in smaller towns, are very modest and you will be expected to dress accordingly.

studying and grades

Most exchange students find the first couple of months at school the most difficult. Your English skills may need quick improvement, and you may find that teachers use very different teaching methods that you are not accustomed to. You can help yourself most by using your dictionary frequently to learn new words and increase your vocabulary, ask questions about anything you do not understand, and reserve a lot of time at home to complete your homework and class assignments.

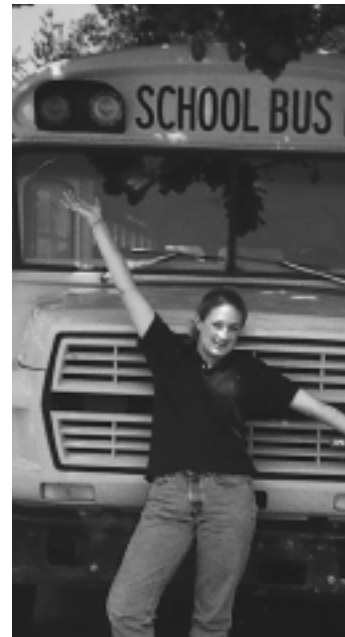
Homework is an important part of the American school system. Most students can expect homework assignments (usually they are due the next day) in almost every class almost every day. You must complete these assignments and return them to the teacher when you are told in order to receive full credit for your work. Your overall grade will be lowered if you do not do your homework assignments, and your ability to learn the subject could be greatly reduced.

difficulty in school

Understanding teachers can be especially hard at first because they sometimes speak quickly and use vocabulary words that you do not yet know. Depending on which part of the country you live in, you may also realize that people speak with an accent which is unfamiliar to you (eventually, you may even develop the same accent in your own speech!). Pay care-

tips

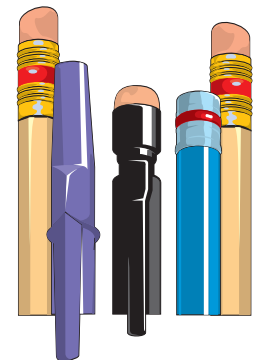
- You can ask your teachers for help when you don't understand something. This could require that you spend some extra time after class or before or after school. Your teachers will usually want to help you as long as you show them you are interested in learning and that you are trying hard.
- Ask your classmates. Many of them would be happy to help you and it's a good way to make new friends.
- The members of your host family, especially your host parents, are expecting that you will need help with school and would enjoy helping you.
- If you still need additional help, ask your Local Coordinator if he/she can help you find a tutor. This will be a cost that you will be responsible for paying.



ful attention during class to what your teacher is saying. Most teachers want their students to raise their hands and to ask them questions in class if they do not understand. This includes foreign exchange students. If you are not yet comfortable speaking in class, then after the class ends, stay to ask the teacher your questions. Please understand that your teacher may have little time to prepare themselves for the next class, so he/she could ask you to come back at the end of the school day or before school the next day. Take any opportunity to ask for extra help until you understand better.

Preparing homework assignments, which are usually due the next day, is a pressure that you may not yet be accustomed to. If you do not understand the teacher or the homework assignment, you might decide not to do it at all. This is a mistake. Review the homework assignment before you leave school. If you do not understand it, ask the teacher or another classmate to explain it to you. If you are at home and cannot understand it, ask a host family member to explain what you do not understand. Schedule your activities to allow enough time (usually two hours) to complete your school work each day. Do not wait until right before you go to bed before starting your homework. You will already be exhausted, **and it will** become twice as hard for you to do.

As stated in the Student/Parent Agreement, you will be expected to achieve a C+ average or higher in all classes. There are several ways to get help if you are having trouble maintaining a C+ average.



diplomas and graduation

Each high school has its own policies regarding exchange students and their grade level. Sometimes these policies are even governed by the state. It is up to the school to decide if you will be allowed to receive a diploma and participate in the graduation ceremony. Some schools will allow you to participate in graduation and receive your Certificate of Completion at the ceremony. Other schools may not even allow you to be admitted into the school at the senior or 12th grade level. **CIEE cannot change the policies that the high schools have regarding foreign exchange students. Likewise, CIEE cannot move you to a new school so that you may receive a diploma.** It is important to remember that regardless of the school's policies, you came here to experience the American culture and lifestyle while perfecting your English. Don't allow the issue of diplomas and graduation ruin your experience.

making friends

You will be eager to meet other young people and form friendships that will last a lifetime. If you have a teenage host sibling, perhaps he or she will introduce you to his or her friends and you will find common interests. Or you may decide to find different friends, which is also fine. To do this, you will have to be outgoing and assertive as you attempt to meet people. The school day offers little time for socializing with classmates, and you will find that each class has different classmates, possibly making it harder to get to know any one person very well during the school day.

Some students report that making friends is harder than expected. Understand that it may take some time before you develop strong friendships with other students. American students often pass each other in the halls and say "Hello, how are you?" as they walk by and do not stop to talk. Do not be offended by this and decide that Americans are unfriendly and not worth knowing. This is simply a standard greeting. You can talk to them longer at other times — perhaps in the halls before classes start in the morning, at lunch, or better yet after school at an activity you have joined.

The best thing you can do to make friends is to join clubs and sports or youth group activities to meet other people with common interests. Do not be shy about talking to other students. With your host family's permission, invite classmates for visits or activities after school or on weekends. As a precaution, your host family will want to meet your new friends before you go out at night with them. Graciously allow your host parents this courtesy as they have only your best interest in mind.

Finally, be prepared that some students may seem superficial to you and you may get discouraged from wanting to form friendships. Several exchange stu-



- Group dating is usually informal. A group of friends, male and female, will all decide to go out together (perhaps bowling, to the movies, etc.). Individuals pay their own way, and expectations are usually casual.
- Going "dutch" may be a date between two people, which is still less formal and in which each person pays for their own expenses on the date. The relationship is still pretty casual.
- An official date is when one person asks the other person out with the intent to pay for the date and with the aim of developing a relationship of some type.

dents have experienced this in the past, but the successful exchange students did not let it prevent them from finding good friends. The difference is that it takes harder work and determination, but ultimately the reward is long lasting friendship.

dating

Different host families have different rules and expectations regarding dating that their children and you must follow. Ask your host parents about these rules so that you can prevent any misunderstandings or problems. Exchange students who become seriously involved with one boyfriend or girlfriend find that their experience may be severely limited and is often filled with more emotional ups and downs than usual. Beyond that, dating is a normal social custom among teens and is often done in one of three ways: group dating, going "dutch", and official dating (there are many terms that are used for this: "going-out" and "going-steady" are two examples).

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Making it Work

Being an exchange student is a challenge. You will come across many obstacles in your path throughout your time abroad. However, this semester/year also has the potential of being one of the most important learning experiences in your life. With the knowledge of what is expected of you, along with some tips on how to handle conflict or problems that arise, you are well on your way! There is a support system in place for you, so take advantage of it and remember that you are not alone.



ciece's expectations

During your experience, CIEE expects that you will represent yourself, your natural parents, your country and the program well. Remember that you may be the only person from your country that your host family and host community ever meets! The impressions that you leave on these people will reflect their ongoing impressions of your family and your country. Additionally, it will reflect on the program as well. **You are an ambassador in every sense of the word.** CIEE expects that you will work hard to improve your English skills, as this is presumably one of the main reasons you decided to join an exchange program. Increase your vocabulary, practice correct language usage, and even learn some slang!

Finally, we hope that you will enjoy the many opportunities that are waiting for you, that you will experience as much about the American lifestyle as you can, and that you will appreciate the generosity of everyone who has contributed to making your exchange a successful and rewarding experience. Express your gratitude at every opportunity. Show others how much you appreciate them. Saying "please" and "thank you" will mean a lot to your host family and Local Coordinator.

having a successful experience

An exchange student who succeeds at having an enriching, interesting, and unique exchange experience is usually one who is open-minded, tolerant, flexible, and patient, and has a great sense of humor. Understanding that there is often more than one way to do something or to think reflects the quality of open-mindedness. The ability to cope with differences on a continuous basis is tolerance. Flexibility with your thoughts and with your lifestyle will allow you to adjust to the many differences you will encounter. Patience will help you develop an appreciation for those differences. And having a sense of humor — being able to laugh at yourself and at the world in general — will promise you some enjoyment of even the most difficult situations.

When you encounter a problem, ask yourself:

- Have I been open-minded about this issue?
- Have I been tolerant to other ways?
- Am I flexible in the way I approach this problem?
- Have I been patient in finding a solution?
- Is there anything funny about my actions or the actions of others that together we can all laugh at?

sevis regulations

SEVIS is a system created by the US Government to help keep track of J-1 Visa participants while in the US. This system, called SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) requires you to provide CIEE with the following information:

- Within 24 hours of arrival at your Host Family, you, your Host Family or Local Coordinator will need to confirm to CIEE that the student has arrived safely.
- Within 5 days of a Host Family and/or high school change, you or Local Coordinator will need to inform CIEE of the new Host Family information.
- Within 48 hours of withdrawing or being dismissed from the program, you, your Host Family or Local Coordinator will need to inform CIEE of the date of withdrawal and reason.

If CIEE does not receive this information within the timeframes listed above, the US State Department will automatically terminate you from the program. Once you are terminated, you will have to return to your home country immediately and may have problems securing future visas for the US. The quickest and most accurate way to update your information with CIEE is by visiting www.mysevis.com. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call our office to give a member of the High School Team the necessary information.

USA HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM RULES:

1. Obey the regulations of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa and the US State Department.

2. Abide by the federal, state, and local laws of the United States and host town. Under these laws, consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone under the age of 21, and the use or possession of illegal drugs is prohibited. These laws may also include local curfews. Be aware of these laws, and be mindful that they may be different from laws in your home country and that violations may lead to serious punishment.

3. Attend the arrival orientation.

4. Accept placement with a family of any race, creed, or color. Live as a member of your Host Family, respect the rules and customs of your Host Family, and accept the responsibilities given to you.

5. Consider your personal health and safety needs when applying for or accepting a place in the Program. If you suffer from any health or other condition that would create a risk for you while abroad, you should not apply.

6. Read and carefully consider all materials made available that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in your host town. Be aware of local conditions that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions.

7. Respect the host high school's guidelines and policies, including those with regard to conduct, delinquency, grade levels, participation in graduation ceremonies, and issuance of a high school diploma.

8. Maintain a C+ average or higher in all courses at the host high school. Courses must include English (other than English as a second language) and an American History course and two other academic courses. Attend school everyday that it is in session and follow school policies with regards to absences.

9. Travel only with adult members of the Host Family, the Local Coordinator, official school, or group organized trips. Students must obtain written permission from CIEE's national office if traveling by air and/or if travel results in school absences. Travel with or visits from natural family members are not permitted before January of the ten-month program and not at all during a five-month program. Travel to your home country is not permitted during the program year.

10. Driving or purchasing a motorized vehicle (car, motorcycle, boat, or any other vehicle requiring a driver's license) is prohibited. Driving is permitted with the instructor of an official driver's education course and only during class hours. This is solely for the purpose of obtaining a driving license and does not allow the student to drive after a license is obtained.

11. Have access to a minimum of \$150 to \$200 US dollars per month to cover personal expenses. Do not borrow money from your Host Family.

12. Students who indicate that they do not smoke on their application may not smoke during the program year. Students who indicate that they do smoke must follow any and all guidelines their family and community may have in regards to smoking. In some States, communities and schools, it is against the law for students under a certain age to smoke or possess tobacco or tobacco related items.

13. The program terminates within two weeks after the last day of school, and arrangements must be made to return home within this time.

14. Acknowledge that CIEE reserves the right to dismiss any student who fails to uphold any and all of the above rules. In the event that a student is dismissed from the program, the parent or natural guardians are responsible for all additional expenses incurred above those of the regular program costs. In the case of early dismissal, program fees will not be reimbursed.

15. Acknowledge that CIEE is not acting in the capacity of in loco parentis with respect to you, and that your natural parents still retain all of their rights and obligations and are expected to maintain regular and frequent (once or twice per month) contact with you telephonically, electronically or in person (if possible, after five months of your program start date).

16. Student should not have previously participated on an academic year or semester high school program in the US in either the J-1 or F-1 category.

17. Participation in extra-curricular activities or athletics is not guaranteed.

18. Employment is not allowed on either or full or part-time basis while on the J-1 visa high school program. However, students may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

program rules

When you applied to the USA High School Program, you and your parents signed an agreement. Most likely, you'll have no problem in following the guidelines that you agreed to, as they are quite basic and help to make sure that you and your host family have a wonderful experience. Make sure that you've read them and that you understand them. You'll hear about them at your orientation, and your Local Coordinator and the CIEE staff can help you if you have any questions.

What happens if the program rules are not followed? CIEE's goal is to help you and your host family through the ups and downs. We all make mistakes now and then, but it's important that CIEE students show maturity and a willingness to correct mistakes. Your Local Coordinator will work with you to change any behaviors or actions that do not comply with CIEE's program guidelines.

It's all about communication. Be open and honest with your host family and your Local Coordinator. Show flexibility and a willingness to change when your actions are creating conflicts and uncomfortable situations. As long as you take this approach, most any situation can be resolved.

Of course, if a resolution cannot be found within a reasonable amount of time, CIEE has certain disciplinary procedures to follow, which you will read about in this section of your handbook. We hope that these steps won't be necessary, but it's good to know about them as you begin your experience. We're here to support you throughout your time here in the USA, and will do everything possible to guide you in making it work!

program discipline

CIEE's USA High School Program has a formal disciplinary system with different steps of discipline. These steps are: warning, probation, and disqualification. Disciplinary decisions are made by the USA High School Program management team based on communication with the Local Coordinator, the student, the host family, and the high school.

There may be cases in which a student is immediately put on probation or even disqualified from the USA High School Program without following the procedure outlined below. Such cases are rare, and would involve serious infractions of CIEE's rules, or US law. CIEE USA High School's management team would make the decision for immediate disqualification. The normal disciplinary procedure is:

1. Warning

2. Probation

3. Dismissal

1. Warning. If a student violates a rule or conducts himself or herself in inappropriate ways, the Local Coordinator may request a **written** letter of warning. A member of CIEE's USA High School staff will issue this letter. The Local

Coordinator, host family, and natural family (through the overseas office), will be sent copies of the warning letter when it is issued.

The intent of the letter of warning is to make the student aware that this is a serious situation. The points of the warning include:

- Informing the student of the specific unacceptable behavior or program violation, and that there should be no further infractions.
- Advising the student that CIEE has discussed the student's behavior with the Local Coordinator. He or she should speak with the Local Coordinator or a CIEE staff member if the reasons for the warning letter are unclear.
- Advising the student that through the CIEE Office, the overseas partner and his or her parents have been formally informed.
- Informing the student of the **specific** steps which must be taken by the student to avoid probation, which is the next possible step in this process.
- Identifying a time frame for reviewing the student's performance.

2. Probation. Probation is the next step in the discipline process. If a student does not meet the terms of the letter of warning and continues inappropriate behavior, the student will be placed on probation. **This is a very serious action and is taken only by the CIEE office.**

The intent of formal probation is:

- To advise the student that he or she is in very serious trouble and if the student does not adjust his or her behavior, termination from CIEE's USA High School Program will result.
- To inform the student that the overseas partner and his or her natural parents have been formally notified of the student's disciplinary status and possible consequences.

3. Dismissal. Ultimately, a student faces disqualification from the USA High School Program and the termination of his or her visa. Obviously this action is not taken lightly and is done only when the student has failed to meet the requirements of CIEE.

Dismissal is the most serious step in the discipline process. It is a step everyone would like to avoid. Therefore, all alternatives are exhausted prior to taking this step.

If a student continues to violate the rules and fails to adhere to the conditions of the letters of warning and probation, CIEE will terminate the student's participation in the USA High School Program.

academic policy

Please keep in mind that you will be participating in an academic program and you must maintain a C+ or better average in each of your courses. Students who receive a failing grade will be placed on academic warning. Failure to improve grades in the stated time frame will result in academic probation, and

possible disqualification. Students in poor academic standing are expected to make an extra effort to improve their grades. They should consult with teachers about ways in which they can work toward improving their grades in the affected classes. Students may be required to hire tutors, at their expense, if they cannot maintain passing grades through the regular course of study.

continuing academic study in the US

The USA High School Program is a 5 or 10-month academic program. All participants receive J-1 visa sponsorship through CIEE for a maximum of 10 months. Each student's program terminates two weeks after the school end date. At this time, all host family responsibility, supervision, and medical insurance ends. CIEE advises that students depart the US at this time.

During the program, many students express interest in pursuing future study in the US, either at the secondary school or collegiate level. Some students even participate in the SAT or TOEFL exams during their stay in order to gain admittance to US colleges and universities. While CIEE supports the academic interests of exchange students, it is important that the focus of your program remains dedicated to your current host family, friends and school. Students who devote excessive time to your studies and college applications risk distancing their host families, teachers and peers, and ultimately, creating problems within the home and at school. Students should be aware that the USA High School Program is, first and foremost, a cultural exchange program. While all students are required to maintain a C+ minimum grade point average, CIEE values a balanced student who devotes equal time to studies, school activities, host family and community. Any student who devotes excessive time to the pursuit of advanced study may be placed on probation and risks disciplinary action.

insurance

All CIEE students are covered by health insurance. Most students are covered by a policy arranged through CIEE. Other students are covered by a health insurance policy arranged by one of our partner organizations. When visiting a doctor's office or medical facility, take all of the information you have received concerning your insurance (especially your policy number and a claim form). If the doctor's office will not bill the insurance company for you, then you are responsible for paying the doctor's office and you will then need to submit a claim form to the insurance company for reimbursement.

worldwide welcome!

We hope you've found the information in this handbook to be useful! Refer to it often for tips and advice. If there's anything that you're not sure about, contact your Local Coordinator. You can also contact the Participant Support Team at 1-800-448-9944 (a free call from any phone). If the office is closed, and you have a serious emergency, you may call CIEE's 24-hour emergency service at 1-866-736-5641 (a free call) or 1-617-459-0859.

Once again, a warm welcome to the CIEE worldwide family. Our goal is to make sure that you and your host family have a positive and memorable experience. Please contact us if there's any way that we can help you.

You can always e-mail us at highschool@ciee.org or visit the CIEE website for USA High School Program students at www.ciee.org/usahs/councilhigh

Best wishes for a wonderful experience!



your notes