

# ***An Introduction to International Student Hosting***



**American Education & Exchange Association (AEEA)** partner with **Happy Homestay USA (HHUSA)** to provide an American high school educational experience opportunity for international students from several countries.

AEEA member schools throughout the United States enroll these students into a high school program leading to graduation and a high school diploma.

HHUSA provides host families for these students. Hosting is a wonderful opportunity to expand your cultural boundaries and world view. If you love cultural diversity, you are sure to enjoy hosting an international student in your home.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions about Hosting International Students***

### ***What Are the Hosting Basics?***

Hosting an international student means sharing your home, your country, and your culture with a student from another country.

International students enroll in one of AEEA's member high schools and often participate in local clubs, school activities, sports, and more. Most students enroll in their 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade year of high school with the intent of remaining until high school graduation. Students usually return to their home countries each summer. Some students, however, enroll in the second semester after attending ELCI. This program focuses on improving their English speaking skills to better equip them for success once they enroll in an AEEA member high school.

### ***Who Can Host?***

Hosting opportunities are open to families of all kinds: families with teens, no children, young children, grown children, single parents and grandparents. Host families live in large cities, suburban areas or in the countryside near an AEEA member high school. Our host families come from varying backgrounds. The most important criteria are that the hosts treat the student like a member of their own family, providing them with not just a house but a home.

Our students are also from diverse family situations. Your local Homestay Coordinator Liaison will assist you with matching an international student to your family situation.

### ***How Will Our Family Benefit by Hosting an International Student?***

Hosting an international student is a rewarding experience for your whole family. You'll learn about another culture and language — without leaving home. You'll start a life-long relationship with your new "son" or "daughter," and when your student returns home you'll have a special friend in another country.

Members of your family will feel closer to each other through sharing your daily lives with an international student. If you have children, they'll gain a broader perspective on the world, learning more about geography, communication, and international cultures. If your children are young, they'll probably love having a big brother or sister from another country.

You will be a citizen diplomat, by creating positive impressions about America and Americans, breaking stereotypes and fostering mutual understanding and respect.

### ***How Many Months Are We Required to Host an International Student?***

Host families typically invite an international student into their home for a full year or at mid-year. The students remain until the school year is completed. There is no further obligation to host for the upcoming year. However, once students get settled and enjoy their host families, it is very common for the host family to re-invite them for the next school year. Many students remain with one host family their entire stay while attending an American high school.

### ***Will My Exchange Student Speak English?***

It is required that all students be able to converse in basic English in order to enroll in a high school program. If they cannot, they are required to attend ELCI (English Language & Culture Institute) until their English proficiency improves.

### ***Will I Receive Financial Compensation for Hosting an International Student?***

Host families receive a reimbursement check of approximately \$550 per student. This represents a reimbursement of room, board and transportation expenses incurred while hosting a student. No IRS 1099 form is issued for this financial reimbursement.

### ***Am I the International Student's Legal Guardian?***

No. The student's natural parents remain legal guardians. Each student's Certificate of Health contains a medical release form so that host parents may secure medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

### ***What if the Student Needs Medical Attention?***

Your student is provided with health insurance by Happy Homestay USA that covers ~~any~~ medical related expenses should they require a visit to the doctor or need medical care. The insurance does not cover immunizations, these costs are the responsibility of the student. Emergency Room visits incur a \$250 deductible; this too is the responsibility of the student. Should your student need prescription medication, the insurance company will reimburse them.

### ***What Is Required of a Host Family?***

Families interested in hosting a high school student are required to:

- Complete a HHUSA Host Family Application, clear a background check and have an in-home prequalification visit conducted by your local Homestay Coordinator.
- Meet any criteria that the local AEEA member high school may have.
- Be able to provide an international student with a private room, desk and suitable study area and three meals per day.
- Provide transportation to and from school each day and to school-related activities.
- Offer a supportive environment as the student goes through his or her academic and cultural adjustment process.
- Take an interest in teenagers/ international students with realistic expectations of what life is like with a teenager.
- Help your student adapt to your family's house rules, HHUSA hosting rules and to American life and culture.
- Familiarize your student with your hometown and promote participation in school and community events.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for the student to live and learn.

**For more information, please contact your AEEA member school Homestay Coordinator:**

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