Getting to Know Each Other: A Guide for Host Families and Exchange Students

Please use this guide to help set ground rules and expectations. Communication early on is one of the keys to a successful host family and exchange student relationship, and establishing expectations early on can help greatly diminish misunderstandings and help in the adjustment for both the host family and exchange student. You can use this guide in conjunction with the Getting to Know Each Other Worksheet.

Please be sure to reach out to your Community Representative for support and guidance!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Host Families</th>
<th>Exchange Students</th>
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**House Rules:**
- Clarify your expectations early on.
- If you have specific rules (for example, no television after 10pm) then put these in writing.
- Be sure students understand any specific rules or unspoken rules in your home. (For example, if a certain chair is reserved for a certain family member.)
- If possible, explain the rationale behind rules.

**House Rules:**
- Each family may have different house rules. Your family should explain these to you.
- You should talk about the house rules with your host family.
- Be sure to understand and respect their expectations.
- If you are not sure what to do, ask questions.

**Respect:**
- Respect cultural or religious differences.
- Respect student’s privacy in their room.
- Listen to and ask about additional needs.
- Be truthful. Express concerns or rules in a respectful manner.

**Respect:**
- Respect the house rules.
- Respect cultural or religious differences.
- Be truthful. Express concerns or needs in a respectful way.

**Family Life:**
- Treat the student as a member of the family, not a guest.
- Treat them as you would wish your own children to be treated in another country.
- Include the student in family activities where appropriate.

**Family Life:**
- You are expected to behave as a member of the family, not as a guest.
- Try to participate in family activities, even if it may seem new or strange to you.
- Talk to your family about problems or needs.
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<tr>
<th>Chores/Responsibilities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• As a member of the family, students should be expected to help with light household chores such as setting or clearing the table.</td>
<td>• As a member of the family, you should help with general household work such as setting or clearing the table.</td>
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<td>• If students are interested, they may be encouraged to help with other light chores.</td>
<td>• If you are interested, you could help with meal preparation, taking out the garbage or sweeping the floor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students should not be expected to baby-sit for long periods of time, or engage in heavy cleaning or housework.</td>
<td>• You may help with the children by reading to them or playing with them; however, you should not be expected to baby-sit.</td>
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<th>Food/Meals:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Tell the student what time you expect them for meals.</td>
<td>• Be on time for family meals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks.</td>
<td>• If you will be late or absent, phone your family in advance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide a variety of foods including adequate proteins, fruits and vegetables.</td>
<td>• If you have allergies tell your family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask if the student has allergies.</td>
<td>• Offer to help with small tasks such as setting the table or clean up.</td>
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<td>• If you elect to eat one of the three meals at a restaurant as a family, you should pay for the student’s meal.</td>
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<th>Computer Use:</th>
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<td>• Set expectations regarding computer usage early on. (For example, amount of time spent on the computer, allowed websites, etc.)</td>
<td>• Adhere to expectations set by your host family regarding computer usage (for the family computer and your own computer).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determine what is considered “excessive use” so the student is aware.</td>
<td>• Review Ayusa’s policy on Social Networking.</td>
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<th>Phone Use:</th>
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<td>• Set guidelines on phone usage for the student. Determine if he/she will get his/her own pre-paid cell phone, calling card or reimburse you for long-distance call charges.</td>
<td>• Adhere to the guidelines as set by your host family regarding phone usage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• * Ayusa recommends the student use their own cell phone or calling card.</td>
<td>• If you use their phone (cell or landline) to make long-distance calls, it is your responsibility to pay them back for any long-distance charges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Utilize the Phone Usage Contract to help set parameters on phone use.</td>
<td>• Likewise, if you opt to get your own cell phone or calling card, it is your responsibility to pay for this.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Refer to the Phone Usage Contract to understand parameters on phone use.</td>
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### Curfew:
- Set rules for curfew and nights out.
- Determine weekday and weekend curfews.
- Determine how often the student is allowed to go out with friends and also set rules for methods (call, text, etc.) of notifying you of where they are, who they are with and when they will be returning home.
- Respect and adhere to the curfews set by your host family.
- Understand what time you should return and how often you are allowed to go out.
- Always be truthful with regards to who you are spending your time with, where you are and when you will be returning home.

### Dress Code:
- Let your student know of any dress code set by the school.
- Let your student know what is deemed inappropriate attire.
- Let your student know of any occasions where he/she might need to dress up. (For example, church, family outings, Thanksgiving, etc.)
- Respect and adhere to school dress code.
- Respect and adhere to appropriate attire as deemed by the community and your host family.

### Transportation:
- Let your student know how he/she will be getting to school. (School bus, getting dropped off/picked up, walking, etc.)
- Set guidelines for how your student will get to and from after-school activities and social events and who is permitted to drive the student.
- If applicable, show your student public transportation routes and how to get home using the bus other methods of public transit.
- As an Ayusa student, you are not permitted to drive a motor vehicle of any kind.
- Respect and adhere to any guidelines your host family sets regarding transportation.
- Understand who is allowed to drive you and how often this is permitted.
- Remember your host family may not always be able to take you everywhere you need to go.
- Communicate with your host family about where you are, who you are with and when you will be returning home.

### Who Pays?
- Communicate early on who will pay for what with regards to family social outings such as dinner, movies, etc.
- Also set guidelines on what the student is expected to pay for such as personal toiletries or special foods the family doesn’t usually buy.
- Understand and be respectful of what you are expected to pay for and be sure to thank your host family if they pay for things.
- Remember that the host family is volunteering and receives no compensation from Ayusa for hosting you.
### Bedroom and Bathroom:
- Provide a comfortable room with a bed, storage space and a study space.
- Respect the privacy of the student’s bedroom.
- Establish guidelines for bathroom usage (what times the student can shower, who cleans the bathroom, etc).

### Bedroom and Bathroom:
- Students should keep their bedroom clean and wash bedding as needed.
- Your host parents are not expected to clean your bedroom
- Be respectful of shared bathroom space and be sure to clean up after yourself.

### Language Practice:
- One of the reasons many international students choose to study in the United States is to improve their English.
- Host families can help by conversing with students on a number of topics and helping them build their vocabulary, or by explaining movies, television or other contexts.

### Language Practice:
- In order to improve your English, you must practice.
- Your host family’s home is an excellent place to practice English.
- Your host family can help you understand how English is spoken in everyday situations and can explain things you don’t understand.

### Cultural Exchange:
- As a host family you are the first representative of American culture.
- Students will perceive American customs through your examples.
- As you share your family customs, you may also want to explain other traditions you are aware of.
- It is also useful to ask students how things are done in their culture in order to allow them to express their experience with cultural differences.

### Cultural Exchange:
- Many host families choose to host international students as a way to exchange culture.
- When you experience real differences between American culture and your own, it may be interesting to share those differences with your host family.
- They want to learn about your country and culture.
- Sharing differences may also help them understand what you are experiencing in the US.

Adapted from: [http://www.freewebs.com/truhost/Host%20Family%20Guide.pdf](http://www.freewebs.com/truhost/Host%20Family%20Guide.pdf)