Dear Host Family,

Welcome to the CIEE USA High School Program and the world of cross-cultural exchange! Your family is about to embark on a fascinating experience by hosting an international exchange student in your home. Soon you will be welcoming a new addition to your family—a teenager from another country. You have many happy moments and new experiences to look forward to in the upcoming months. We would like to begin by thanking you for hosting and for choosing to be a part of the CIEE mission and our USA High School Program.

Each CIEE USA High School Program host family is special, unique in its make-up and daily routine. As a host family, your beliefs, habits, and customs—which you may sometimes take for granted—will be a fascinating part of the educational experience for your new “son” or “daughter.” Interestingly, you will begin to look at your community, lifestyle, and home through his or her eyes.

As your family and your exchange student get to know one another, many questions will arise. You will find many similarities, along with a number of differences. Your family and your host student will become lifelong friends through sharing your different cultures. Throughout your hosting experience you will discover much about another culture, about the world around you, and about yourselves. The next few months will be exciting and new. Each of you will also face some challenges along the way. This handbook is dedicated to helping you answer some of the questions that will arise, such as culture shock, homesickness, and language barriers. The hosting experience is unique to each family, so this handbook serves as only a guide. By having common sense, reading through this handbook, and asking for support from your Local Coordinator and CIEE, you will gain valuable knowledge and confidence as a host family.

Most importantly—enjoy your new experience!

CIEE USA High School Staff
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is Involved</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The CIEE Host Family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEE Welcome Families</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Coordinators (LCS)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEE USA High School Staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEE USA High School Support Team</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA High School Program</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the CIEE USA High School program recruit students?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does a student qualify?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the students get their visas to come to the United States?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who pays for the program?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do students stay with American host families?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Hosting Experience</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Arrival: Host Family Perspective</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Arrival: The Student Perspective</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival Day</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the Beginning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Shock</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Problems Arise</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Information</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Rules + Policies</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIEE Rules for Students</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEE Policies for Students</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are four major participants in your exchange experience: you, the host family; the international exchange student; your CIEE Local Coordinator (LC); and the Portland-based CIEE USA High School Program staff. Overseeing all international exchange students and program providers in the U.S. is the U.S. Department of State. The following offers you a breakdown of all those involved in the exchange experience.

The CIEE Host Family

Each family has their own unique structure, character, and routine. Bringing an international exchange student into your family means adding an entirely new element into your daily life. Unless you have hosted before, your family will be faced with a brand new experience where you will need to communicate house rules and ways of relating to one another. You will soon find your comfort zone, but it may take some time, and realize that the student will be adjusting to their new life and family at the same time. All relationships take a while to develop. It is up to you and your family to be flexible until you find what works best for you. By being open and communicating effectively, your exchange student will begin to feel comfortable and at home, and will in turn, open himself/herself up to you.

CIEE Welcome Families

CIEE Welcome Families are families that have chosen to host a student for a short term. They usually commit to a six week period to “welcome” the student to America and help them adjust to life and high school abroad. Welcome Families fulfill the same criteria as permanent families; they need to complete a host family application with a criminal background check and must have an in-home interview and reference check.

As a CIEE host family, you agreed to the following responsibilities as part of your commitment to host:

1. Open up your home and share your family’s culture and traditions with a young person from another culture, while providing support and parental supervision.

2. Promptly inform CIEE of any change in Host Family circumstances including: Address, finances, employment, criminal record, program participation, etc.

3. Provide the student with three meals a day unless student decides to buy school lunch.

4. Provide the student with a bed of his or her own. Students may share a bedroom with a host brother or sister, providing that the host sibling is of the same sex and within four years in age.

5. Since this is an academic program, CIEE requires that a host family provides the student with a quiet place to study. This can be in any room in the house where studying and homework may be completed.

6. Treat their exchange student as a member of the family and not as a guest. Your student should be subject to the same house rules, chores, discipline, praise, and affection as other family members. By treating your exchange student as an equal they will become a part of your family.

7. Adhere to CIEE policies and guidelines, and keep in touch with the Local Coordinator if any questions and/or issues arise.
The Student

CIEE USA High School Program students come from 55 different countries. They are screened candidates who have been accepted to this program because of their commitment and desire to enroll in an U.S. high school for a five-month or ten-month period and live with an American family and learn about day-to-day U.S. life.

You can expect that CIEE exchange students:

- Understand that they may be placed with a host family anywhere in the continental United States.
- May be from large cities, whereas host families generally live in suburban or rural settings. This new lifestyle will be a big change for them. Like most teenagers, exchange students are going through a number of changes. Add to this the fact that she/he has been separated from his/her support network of natural family, close friends, and community.
- Will be facing a big challenge during their time in the U.S., and should be commended for their courage. Living in a foreign country and speaking a different language will be full-time work for your student. Being an exchange student comes with a number of new rules and responsibilities. As the “outsider,” students need to make an extra effort to fit in and fully experience their new life.
- Are required to follow the regulations of the host family, CIEE, and the State Department.
- Are covered by CIEE insurance and arrive with their own spending money.

Local Coordinators (LCs)

CIEE Local Coordinators represent the USA High School Program as local representatives in your community and are held accountable for the students they place in homes such as yours. CIEE has a network of LCs across the U.S. who have a desire to meet and work with young people from other countries, as well as becoming familiar with their own community and neighbors. CIEE LCs are committed to cross-cultural awareness, international education, and a love for students and other cultures.

Your Local Coordinator is trained by CIEE to provide support and answer any questions that arise. LCs are available to act as a liaison with the CIEE Portland Office, and to act as a mediator of and conflicts or misunderstandings that arise between students, families, or even schools. Families should always feel comfortable calling on their LC, even if just to check in. CIEE USA High School Local Coordinators are held accountable to a number of parties. Their job is both challenging and rewarding, and they receive a small commission for their services which often goes toward the out-of-pocket expenses they may incur, such as phone calls, mileage, postage, and photocopies.

CIEE USA High School Staff

CIEE is based in Portland, Maine. The CIEE USA High School staff work towards ensuring the best possible quality exchange experience that we can provide. We work to develop and maintain relationships with our overseas representatives, update application requirements, and establish program growth and future goals. In addition, the CIEE
USA High School staff recruits, hires, and trains Local Coordinators, providing them with continuous support. From our Portland office we oversee any major supervision problems, keep in communication with our overseas representatives, and do our best to ensure that our LCs, students, host families, and high schools are receiving the support and attention that they need 24 hours a day.

CIEE USA High School Support Team

In cooperation with your CIEE Local Coordinator, the CIEE Support Team works from the Portland Main Office to assist with student concerns during the program year. The support staff maintains close communication with your Local Coordinator to receive regular updates on student adjustment throughout the year. While the Local Coordinator is the first source of assistance locally, the support team is always available as a resource for participants, host families, and high schools. The support team is trained and experienced in managing conflict, assisting with cultural adjustment issues, and providing support for emergency situations. Our staff is knowledgeable and experienced, and will be more than happy to answer questions, provide assistance, or discuss student concerns.

Asking for Help

If you are unable to solve a problem, or feel that a problem is very serious, contact your Local Coordinator for help. Your Local Coordinator can help in a variety of ways: by listening and giving advice, by talking with your student, by talking with your family, or by mediating a family meeting. By going to your LC, you should not feel as if you have failed. It is often difficult to clearly analyze a situation when you are deeply involved. Your LC, with the support of the CIEE Portland Office, is there to provide support, help clarify problems, and consider alternatives to arrive at the best solution.

CIEE Local Coordinators are responsible for:

- Promoting the CIEE USA High School Program and our mission within their local community
- Recruiting host families and matching them with CIEE exchange students
- Conducting a home interview of prospective families
- Arranging for the local school to accept and enroll CIEE exchange students
- Providing a host family orientation
- Meeting students upon arrival
- Providing monthly contact with students and filling out student report forms on every student every month
- Being available to the host family and/or student for help and to offer support if needed
- Being available for emergency assistance
- Arranging at least one local get-together during the year
- Finding a second, permanent host family within the same school district for a CIEE student in the event that the original placement does not work out
The CIEE USA High School Program depends on many factors to keep everything running smoothly. Below are the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the program. If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook please feel free to ask your Local Coordinator or call the Portland office.

How does the CIEE USA High School Program recruit students?

CIEE works with overseas representatives that promote the program, as well as recruit and screen potential applicants.

How does a student qualify?

Students apply through our overseas representatives by submitting a written application, participating in interviews conducted in English, providing transcripts of his/her last three years of school, and taking an oral and written English language test. The overseas representative passes along only those applications that meet CIEE criteria. The CIEE USA High School staff then review each application. Only students with the required level of English, expected good performance in school, parental support, and the necessary motivation and adaptability to succeed on an academic exchange program are accepted.

CIEE has specific qualifications that international students must meet before they are accepted into our program:

- Must be between the ages of 15 and 18.5 at the start of the program
- Actively enrolled in high school in their home country
- Cannot have failed a year of school or English in the past three years
- Have studied at least three years of English and possess basic practical skills in written and spoken English
- Demonstrate the proper motivation and maturity to participate in the CIEE USA High School Program
How do the students get their visas to come to the United States?

The CIEE USA High School Program is designated by the U.S. State Department as an official Exchange Visitor Program. This designation allows CIEE to provide accepted students with a DS-2019 form that is necessary for them to acquire a J-1 Visa from the United States Embassy or Consulate in their home country and spend five or ten months studying in the U.S. hosted on the CIEE USA High School Program.

Who pays for the program?

In most cases, students’ natural families pay a fee for the program. CIEE charges our overseas representatives a standard program fee for every participant, and the overseas representatives set the final program price in order to cover the additional services that their office provides. These services vary from representative to representative and may include flight arrangements, pre-departure orientations, language courses, and additional insurance. CIEE provides all CIEE USA High School students with detailed information about their host family prior to departure, a two- to three-day student orientation (in New York City, San Francisco, or Washington, D.C.), high school enrollment, local supervision, and medical insurance.

Why do students stay with American host families?

An American host family experience is a way for both the exchange student and host family to learn firsthand about the world around them. This cross-cultural learning experience begins when students from around the world become “adopted” members in homes like yours across the U.S. By sharing daily lives and personal experiences, both student and host family will participate in a unique educational process that teaches lessons that will last a lifetime. In order for this experience to be successful, all parties involved must have an open mind, a willingness to compromise, and most of all, lots of patience. Having a stranger live in your home, and being open to understanding a new culture and accepting new habits are big changes. Both the host family and the student have a lot of giving to do. You can eliminate much of the inevitable frustrations by being as prepared as possible.
Pre-Arrival: Host Family Perspective

Families decide to host an exchange student at different times during the year. While many host families find themselves with months to think about their hosting experience, some of you sign on shortly before your student’s arrival. Either way, there are several steps that you can take to learn as much as possible about your student’s homeland to prepare for your hosting experience.

- Find your student’s country and town on a map
- Look up his/her country online, or do some light research at your local library
- Stay on top of world news stories
- Speak to people who have traveled to that country or have relatives there
- Visit a local ethnic club to gain more insight
- Dine at a restaurant that serves food from your student’s culture
- Rent a movie that takes place in your student’s country
- Watch for educational programming on television
- Ask your family members to come to dinner one night having found something out about your student’s culture or country

Write to your student immediately to:

- Let him/her know how much you are looking forward to his/her arrival
- Send information about your town and community, perhaps send a local newspaper
- Include photographs or postcards of nearby sights
- Provide information about high school courses and clubs
- Describe the local weather and give ideas on what to pack

Familiarize yourself with his/her language:

- Learn the correct pronunciation of your student’s name
- Purchase a bilingual dictionary
- Learn a few words in your student’s language (such as: hello, thank you, and good night)
- Purchase a CD of music from his/her country

Prepare a “Welcome Kit” to give your student upon arrival:

- Draw a map of the house
- Create a welcome letter from the whole family
- Provide a scrap book for memories of the orientation and his/her arrival in the U.S.
- Prepare a small address book with addresses, phone numbers, and emergency numbers
- Include a small English or bilingual dictionary
- Provide some local post cards, and return-address labels made for your student (including “USA” on the label)
- Provide a metric conversion table
- Consider having a set of house keys made
Become informed about the hosting experience:

- Invite a current exchange student into your home and ask questions
- Get in touch with a family who has hosted before
- Attend the host family orientation that your Local Coordinator will arrange
- Stay in touch with your Local Coordinator and be sure to ask any questions that arise

Call your student:

- Since international phone calls can be expensive, many host families choose to make one call to their student a few weeks before the student will depart from home
- Set up a home Skype account and recommend your student do the same—that way they can talk to their family back home for free during their stay in America
- Be mindful of the time difference between countries
- Your student’s English may be at its worst on the telephone and is not a good indicator of his/her language ability as they will likely be nervous—do not be concerned if communication is a bit strained
- The phone may be answered by a non-English speaker so make sure to ask for your student by name

Your student’s space:

- Before he/she arrives, take the time to make up his/her bed
- Clear out some drawers and make room in the closet
- Consider framing a photograph of the student and his/her natural family (from the student’s application) and add to your own display of family photographs

Pre-Arrival: The Student Perspective

A student may find out who his/her host family is either months ahead of time, or just days prior to his/her departure. Either way, the student has known for some time that he/she will be spending five or ten months in the U.S. and has mentally prepared him/herself as much as possible.

Once a student has been accepted into the program, he or she will receive informational materials and participate in programs that will help to prepare the student for the year abroad. Students first receive notification of a family match through the overseas representative in their home country. This notification is in the form of an email report sent by CIEE to the overseas representative with the family name, address, and phone numbers, as well as information about the Local Coordinator and the local high school. Students receive a complete host family application that includes family photos. Each overseas representative provides the students with a pre-departure orientation and information about what to expect. The content and timing will vary, but in general these informational meetings attempt to set realistic expectations, answer any last minute questions, ease natural parents’ concerns, discuss U.S. culture, and help the students understand the rules.
and policies of the CIEE USA High School Program. The overseas representatives are responsible for arranging each student’s international and domestic flight arrangements. Students are required to arrive with an open-ended, round trip international ticket. This will allow the student to book his/her return flight without restrictions, and is a U.S. State Department regulation. Most students need to purchase a domestic return ticket at the end of the year.

All students are required to participate in a CIEE orientation upon arrival in the U.S. The CIEE USA High School Program provides a two- to three-day orientation in New York City, San Francisco, or Washington, D.C. The orientation is led by CIEE staff and includes two travel days, (flights to the U.S. and from the orientation city to the host community), in addition to one full day of orientation programming. Students are divided into small groups and participate in workshops that cover homesickness, culture shock, program rules and policies, high school information, and tips on living with a host family. Students also participate in sightseeing and social activities. During the orientation, students will receive a student handbook, orientation materials, a student identification card, insurance information, and a CIEE T-shirt. If a student is unable to attend the group orientation upon arrival in your community, his/her Local Coordinator will provide a local orientation.

Arrival Day

This is the day both you and your student have been waiting for his/her arrival to your community. You are both very excited and perhaps a little scared. Your student may be feeling overwhelmed (and jetlagged), so we have put together some suggestions on how to handle your first day together, and information on what to expect.

Going to the Airport

CIEE students arrive at the nearest major airport to the host family. Although students try to purchase tickets to the closest possible airport, tickets to small commuter airports may significantly increase the cost of the airfare as well as create very long layovers for students who are traveling alone. Host families, particularly those in rural areas, may be asked to drive up to two hours to pick up their student, and both CIEE and the student greatly
appreciate this effort. While you will know your student’s arrival date well in advance, the flight details themselves may not be available until just several days prior to your student’s arrival. CIEE will provide host families and Local Coordinators with flight details as soon as they are received from the overseas representative. Unfortunately this can be last minute and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience it may cause. It is always a good idea to call the airline to confirm an on-time flight arrival before you head off to the airport.

Your Local Coordinator
While Local Coordinators do their best to be present at the airport on arrival day, this is not possible for everyone. Some LCs work full time and are not able to get the time off. Other LCs may have more than one student arriving and are not able to greet each one. Host families are responsible for meeting their student at the airport upon arrival, whether or not the LC will be present. If your LC is not able to be there with you, they will come over to meet the student shortly after he/she arrives.

First Contact
Many host families prepare a large sign and/or bring balloons or flowers to welcome their student. This will help the student to identify you. Students are encouraged to wear their CIEE T-shirt or a CIEE nametag, but may choose to wear their own clothing instead, eager to make a good first impression. Be sure to bring your camera along so that you can look back on this special day. This moment may be one of excitement, nervousness, awkwardness, happiness, and/or relief. Your student may greet you with a big hug and kiss or a handshake and nervous “hello.” Be sure to smile and let them know how happy you are that they have finally arrived. Take your cues from your student and do whatever feels right.

Arriving Home
There is generally much anticipation as to how the first meeting will go. It is a good idea to find a quiet place to sit down and talk for a few minutes. Ask your student how the flight was and what they liked best about the orientation. Remember that your student may be keyed up with excitement or nervousness, or may be very tired from his/her journey and still suffering from jet lag. Observe his/her behavior and do not try to fit everything in at once—you will have plenty of time later to catch up. Although your student has studied English for years, this is probably his/her first time speaking nonstop in a second language. Speak slowly and clearly (not loudly) and expect to repeat much of what you say again over the first few weeks.

Discuss what everyone wants to be called; will you be “Mom and Dad?” Does your student have a nickname? Agree upon what is comfortable for everyone, bearing in mind that you can always make changes later. This is not the time to discuss household rules or schedules. Your student will only be overwhelmed and need to be reminded again later.

The Home Tour
Briefly show your student around the house and point out only the routines that she/he needs to know right away (for example: how the shower works, use of the bathroom, location of the light switches, and where to put his/her belongings). Allow your student plenty of time to unpack, take a nap, and just unwind. He/she would probably like to call his/her natural family to let them know that she/he has arrived safely.

At the Beginning
Many host families make the mistake of planning too much too soon. Your focus should be to do as much as you can to help your student feel like a family member, not a guest. Be flexible. Your student may tire quickly, or may be filled with energy. Make plans according
to what you think your student is up for. Packing the first week with activities and parties may give the student an unrealistic expectation of what life in the U.S. will be like for them. This does not mean that you should not celebrate his/her arrival, but try to use moderation in your planning and keep your student informed as to what is happening.

Here are some additional tips for the first few days:

- Make sure that your student has enough space to unpack. Try to get a sense of things that you can do to make him/her more comfortable.

- Discuss with your student where he/she plans to keep important documents, such as passports, airline tickets, and insurance information. These should be stored in a safe place but also in a location that is easily accessible in case of an emergency.

- Give the student a complete tour of the house, pointing out where things are kept such as linens, pantry items, and reading materials.

- Explain where coats are hung, where to throw trash out, and what to do with food waste. Point out the location of light switches, lamps, and laundry facilities. Show how to operate the television, stereo, garage door, and how to lock the doors.

- Take a walking tour of the neighborhood and drive him/her around the town. Orient your student to the location of your house in relation to the downtown, shopping areas, grocery store, and high school. Show them where you work, bring them to the clubs, church or synagogue, or the YMCA that you belong to.

**Family Rules**

While it is expected that students must follow all host family rules, it is your responsibility to communicate clearly what these rules include. Prior to the student’s arrival, it is a good idea to take the time to sit down with family members and prepare a list of rules. Putting the rules in writing will help the student, allowing him/her to review them as questions arise. Some house rules are unspoken or rarely talked about, but your exchange student should not be expected to know about these, so be sure to include them with the rest of the rules. It is

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**Some suggested topics to cover regarding family rules:**

1. Pets—feeding them and walking them
2. Laundry—where dirty laundry is kept, how laundry is done
3. Bathroom etiquette
4. Keeping doors locked or unlocked
5. How your family expresses appreciation and thanks
6. How your family expresses disagreement
7. What is “up for grabs” to eat
8. What it means in your family to be on time
9. Things that are off-limits
10. What is shared by all
11. Where and when a student can entertain friends
12. What a closed door means
13. Mealtime—when and what help is expected
14. Chores—who does what?
15. Taking out the garbage and how to recycle
16. Bedtime and curfew
17. Television viewing rules
18. Dating rules
19. Computer/internet use
20. Telephone rules
important to keep lines of communication open at all times. Don’t get discouraged if things do not get off to a smooth start, everything can be worked out through discussion. Small aggravations that get ignored can bloom into a bigger problem later. “Nip it in the bud!” Speak honestly with your student (and encourage him/her to do the same) about what concerns you and arrange a time to discuss and evaluate how things are going along the way.

Settling In
The first few days after your student arrives, he/she will probably feel like, and be treated as, a guest. Over time, your exchange student will begin to become a member of your family. However, it is not like bringing an infant home from the hospital, where you will teach him or her everything from the beginning. Your host son/daughter is a teenager who has been used to the way things are done at his/her own home and now needs to be taught what it is like in your family. In addition, each student adapts to his/her new life at his/her own speed; some students fit in right away while others take a bit longer.

Routines
So much of your family’s day-to-day life is taken for granted. Be sure to take the time to explain to your student the family routine to help him/her fit in. Talk about when everyone wakes up, who is in charge of breakfast, making beds and changing sheets, carpools, etc. You can make things much easier for your student if you tell him/her about your routines from the start.

Meals
While it is not expected for host families to make special meals for their exchange students, it is important to find out if they have any allergies or aversions. Most teenagers are willing to try new foods, but do not be surprised if your student does not like the same foods as you. Many foods are now universal, with pizza and hamburgers found in countries around the world. What remains different are dining times and styles. The typical U.S. dinner time is 6:00pm (viewed by many cultures as early) and is often eaten in a hurry on the way to a ball game or PTA meeting. Europeans and Brazilians, for example, tend to have a more formal evening meal that begins between 9:00 to 10:00pm. Your student will adapt to your ways, but it may take some adjustment. School lunches are a topic that should be discussed. If the student chooses to buy school lunch s/he needs to pay for it.

Chores
Your exchange student should assume the same household responsibilities as you would expect of your own son or daughter. Routine chores such as making the bed, doing laundry, taking out the garbage and recycling, meal preparation, and washing the dishes are part of a student’s everyday life. Although some of the students come from parts of the world where it is typical to have household help, they have all been told that in the U.S. everyone in the family pitches in with the chores. Students can also be assigned additional chores such as yard work, washing the car, and house cleaning if part of the shared family routine. Chores should not interfere with the student’s ability to participate in extracurricular activities.

Siblings
Both the exchange students and their host brothers or sisters greatly look forward to having a special relationship with one another. However, like all friendships, it may need some time to grow. This
relationship is not always a guaranteed success: your own children may develop feelings of jealousy at the extra attention your student is receiving; the exchange student may outshine the host sibling in a similar sport; or each is not what the other expected. If trouble arises, it is very important that host parents show equal consideration for both sides of the argument. Help your child imagine how she/he would be in a similar situation and point out that they do not need to be best friends, but do need to respect each other as family members.

Language
Although all CIEE students have studied English for a number of years, generally they have had limited opportunities for conversational practice. A newly arrived student will find listening and communicating continuously in English to be exhausting. In addition, your exchange student’s language skills will be at his/her worst during the first few weeks, due to stress and the pressure to communicate only in a foreign language. He/she may seem quiet or disinterested at times, but this may be more a case of fatigue or frustration that comes with not being able to express ideas and feelings as easily as in his/her native language. Try to include activities where speaking is not necessary, such as playing sports, listening to music, or working on an art project.

Always encourage your student to express himself/herself so that he/she gains confidence and practice. Avoid speaking on your student’s behalf, but do correct pronunciation. Remember to speak clearly and slowly (not loudly) and expect to repeat yourself. When in doubt if your student understood something that was said, ask him/her to repeat it, and ask questions that cannot be answered with just a “yes” or “no.”

Transportation
Host families are expected to help the student with transportation to and from school. This does not mean that the student needs to be driven every day, but that she/he should be shown the various modes of transportation that are available—whether it is walking, riding a bike, taking a bus, or becoming part of a carpool. Explain transportation arrangement in detail, and if possible, escort your student to the bus stop or walk with them the first few days.

Religion
Although some exchange students are religious and devout, many do not practice a religion. Here in the U.S., religion can play a very important role in the spiritual and social life of many host families. CIEE students are initially asked to attend services with their host families in order to get the experience, but are by no means required to participate on a regular basis if they do not want to. It is important to let your student know that the church/synagogue often fills a social role and that he/she may want to try out the youth group to make friends and to gain a feeling of belonging to the community. Families and students need to come to an agreement as to what kind of participation is comfortable for both sides, while respecting each other’s freedom of choice. If your student wishes to attend services of a different faith, try to help him/her connect with a member of that religious organization who will help with introductions and/or transportation.

Money
Students are expected to have access to a minimum of $150 to $200 per month to cover personal expenses. Since students are bringing their own spending money, host families are not expected to bear any financial burden beyond food, housing, and transportation. While some students arrive with all of their spending money, many will receive periodic allowances from home. Other students will arrive with a credit card or ATM card that enables them to withdraw funds electronically from an overseas account. Find out from your student how they are set up financially for their year abroad so that you can provide help in setting up a bank account. Talk together with the bank to establish an account that can enable funds to be easily transferred from overseas. Remember that the students are teenagers who probably have minimal (if any) experience managing money and also may have trouble understanding the value of a new currency. Assisting them in creating a financial plan for the year—and helping to create a monthly budget—will be appreciated. Have a clear discussion on what you expect the students to be responsible for regarding trips and evenings out. Try not to pay for anything at the beginning of the year that you don’t intend to continue paying for throughout the student’s stay. Each host family needs to establish what will work best for them.

**Telephone**
Students are responsible for the cost of all personal telephone calls they make. Do some research before your student arrives to find out the cost of calling his/her home country. Discuss with the student the best way she/he wants to make calls. Many students choose to use phone cards for all long distance and international calls. That way they will not have to get involved with paying their host family for telephone bills. There are Internet phone systems like Skype that are often used because of their free or extremely discounted rates and easy access.

**Cell Phones**
It is becoming more and more common for students to arrive with cell phones on which they can make and receive international calls. Be sure to set ground rules about when it is appropriate to use the cell phone. The cost of international calls can be enormous, and students should be encouraged to write letters or correspond through email if possible.
Culture Shock

Traveling to a foreign culture as a tourist is a completely different experience than living in a foreign culture for an extended period of time. The start of most exchange experiences begins the same, as if it were a short holiday. At first everything is a new adventure. Soon to follow is a period of exhaustion due to adjusting to a new country with a different language, culture, community, family, school, friends, diet, climate, etc. Coping with all of the changes requires a high level of concentration in order to function each day. It is very common for exchange students to experience what is known as “culture shock”—feelings of frustration and anxiety due to unfamiliar surroundings and customs.

Culture shock can affect each student in a unique way. Occasional sadness, a desire to speak with people from home frequently, and frustrations with language barriers or the American culture are fairly common responses. More severe cases of culture shock may lead to a student withdrawing, sleeping excessively, losing his/her appetite or overeating, or becoming extremely depressed or negative. Showing extra support and sympathy during this time can help the student a great deal. Encourage them to remember that this is a typical reaction and that they will get through it. Help your student find ways to stay busy and plan future activities and trips.

Your Local Coordinator can be a resource for you and your student at this time. You can also visit www.ciee.org/highschool for resources on adjusting. Throughout the year, you will also receive emails from the Portland staff with timely recommendations to help you deal with the roller coaster that is culture shock.

Cultural Differences

Exchange programs exist to share the different cultures found throughout the world. Whether such differences are subtle or blatantly obvious, they need to be viewed as only differences, and not as right or wrong. Hosting a teenager from a foreign culture means not only hosting a teenager, but also hosting his/her foreign culture! Your host son or daughter is a product of his/her own natural family as well as the ways of the country where he/she grew up. If you are having a problem, or there is a misunderstanding, take a moment first to consider if the source of the problem may be a cultural difference.

Below are some examples of cultural differences that you may experience:

- The host daughter from Thailand who spends much of her time in the bedroom studying with the door closed may not be anti-social. Thai students put in long hours studying and take schoolwork very seriously.

- The host son from Brazil who takes instructions presented by his host father more seriously than when his host mother is asking him to do something may not be disrespectful. He may be used to getting information and directions from the “man of the house.”

- The German host daughter who is stunned that her host siblings know very little about U.S. politics may not be judgmental. In most parts of the world, teenagers are aware and involved in global politics and especially U.S. policies since so much of the world is affected by decisions made by the U.S. government.

- The Polish host son who spends much of his time “arguing” at the dinner table may not be hostile. His family and friends in Poland may value analytical discussions and heated debates.
Try to remember that your student may be viewing some of your behavior as strange or different. By asking questions and gaining a better understanding of what life at home is like for him/her, you will not only avoid potential problems, but will also learn something new about the world around you. What makes this experience so special is the dissimilarity—don’t miss the opportunity to learn about your student’s culture and customs. Exchange students are proud to speak about their country and will appreciate it if new family and friends want to learn about their homeland.

When Problems Arise

It will be surprising if you go through the entire program year with absolutely no problems. Hopefully, issues that do occur will be on a minor scale and can be resolved quickly. Your first approach should be to speak with the student about what is going on, keeping in mind the following questions:

- What do we think the problem is?
- What is the student’s understanding of the problem?
- Has there been a family discussion about the problem?
- Have we explained what the rules are?
- Is the student able to explain what the rules are?
- Do we treat the student like we treat other teenagers?
- Have we noticed signs of jealousy among the children in our family, including the student?
- What activities do we do with our student?
- In what ways are we communicating our feelings about how we are getting along?
- What is the student doing to adjust to our family routine?
- Have we allowed our student some personal time to be alone?
- In what ways does the student participate in the family?
- In our perception, does the student spend more time alone than with the family?
- What has the student done to make friends outside of the family?
- How well is the student adjusting to new school routines?
- How much is the student trying to improve his or her English?
- How frequently have the student and natural family maintained contact?
- How has the student shared his or her own culture with us?
- Do we feel our student is exhibiting indicators of culture shock?
High School Information

Enrollment and Grade Placement
Your Local Coordinator is responsible for the completion of the student’s High School Enrollment Form. Grade assignment is at the discretion of the school administrator, based on your student’s transcripts and school policy.

Diplomas and Graduation
Each high school has its own policies regarding exchange students. Sometimes, these policies are even governed by the state. It is up to the school to decide if your student will be allowed to receive a diploma and participate in the graduation ceremony. Some schools will allow exchange students to participate in graduation and receive a Certificate of Completion at the ceremony. Other schools may not even allow your student to be admitted into high school at the senior, or 12th grade, level. The policies that the high schools have regarding foreign exchange students cannot be changed by CIEE and must be respected by the student and host family without argument.

CIEE will not change a student’s school so that he/she may receive a diploma.

Prior to enrolling in the CIEE USA High School Program, all students are made aware of the fact that there is no guarantee that they will receive a diploma, and each student signs a contract agreeing to follow the rules of their host high school.

Course Selection
This is best done after your student arrives. It may be helpful if you can accompany him/her to school to help with this process. The student’s language ability, academic history, and areas of interest should be considered in selecting appropriate courses. CIEE requires every student to take at least four academic courses including one English or Literature course (English as a Second Language cannot be substituted): one U.S. History, Government, Civics or Social Studies course; and two other academic courses. Some students may need to take specific courses as required by the high school in their home country—this will be listed below the Grade Transcript section of the student’s application form. Make sure that your student is introduced to his/her guidance counselor and understands what role the guidance counselor plays. This position does not exist in most schools abroad.

Transportation
Host families are responsible for ensuring that the student has transportation to and from school. The means of transportation may be walking, riding a bike, taking a school bus, public bus, or carpool. Explain the transportation arrangements to your student very carefully and consider accompanying him/her on the first day, or making a “trial run” before school begins.

Activities
The social activities, clubs, and teams that all U.S. high schools offer will be new to your student. This is an important part of the exchange experience—joining these activities is also an excellent way for your student to make friends. Be sure that your student is aware of the variety of after school activities that exist and encourage him/her to explore what is offered and to get involved. You may consider making this a rule: your student must be involved with at least one extracurricular activity throughout his/her enrollment at school. This rule will enable students to have an easier time making friends at the start of the school year.
School Lunches
As mentioned earlier, school lunches are a topic that should be discussed. If the student chooses to buy school lunch s/he needs to pay for it. If the student chooses to buy lunch at school, your family is not responsible for the cost.

Volunteer Project
CIEE USA High School students come to the U.S. prepared to spend a minimum of 8 hours a semester volunteering as part of their mandatory Community Service Project. CIEE feels that this experience will allow for the students’ learning to be complete—he/she will not just study in a new school, perfect language skills, and learn about day-to-day life in the U.S., but will also have the experience of giving back to the community. Students select one of three areas of focus for their volunteer work and will need help from you or the Local Coordinator in order to find an organization to become involved with. Information packets will be sent out to students soon after they arrive in the host community. Students must complete an essay at the end of their semester/year and a member of the organization where they volunteered must complete an evaluation form. Completion of this project is required for a successful completion of the CIEE USA High School Program and in order to receive a Certificate of Completion from CIEE.

Tutoring
Students are required to maintain a C+ average or higher in all courses at school. If the school feels that tutoring (either language tutoring or tutoring directly related to a specific course) would help the student with schoolwork, special help should be arranged. The school can often recommend someone to provide tutoring, or your Local Coordinator can help locate an appropriate tutor. Your student understands that he/she must cover the cost of the tutor’s fee.

Tip: Have your student visit www.ciee.org/highschool for ideas and advice on Community Service Projects!
CIEE Rules for Students

Each CIEE student is expected to follow the rules of the CIEE USA High School Program as well as the policies of each individual family.

Both the student and his/her natural parent/guardian have signed that they are aware that participation in the CIEE USA High School Program is contingent upon his/her agreement to uphold the standards of acceptable behavior while abroad, as outlined below in the CIEE USA High School Program Rules:

1. Obey the regulations of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa and the U.S. 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 your host family and their rules and customs, and accept the responsibilities given to you. CIEE, in its sole discretion, is responsible for choosing a student’s host family placement.
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 every day 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, travelling internationally 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. Any visit from the natural family must be approved by CIEE before the family members travel to the U.S. Visits from friends from your home country are not permitted at any time during the program. Travel to your home country is not permitted during the program, unless approved by CIEE.
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 per month to cover personal expenses. Do not borrow money from your host family. Do not lend money to 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. Student should not have previously participated on an academic year or semester high school program in the U.S. in either the J-1 or F-1 category.

15. Participation in extra-curricular activities or athletics is not guaranteed. Employment is not allowed on either a full or part-time basis while on the J-I visa high school program. However, students may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

16. Student’s primary intention for participation in the program, and primary focus during the program, should be the cultural exchange experience and not graduation from an American high school or enrollment in an American college or university.

17. Students may not initiate any life-changing decisions or actions while on the program, including changing religions (though a student is free to explore the tenets of any religion), pregnancy or marriage. Students may not alter their body in any way while on the program (for example, with tattoos or body piercings).

18. Students may be dismissed from the program if they suffer from a life-threatening medical condition or debilitating psychological condition.

19. Refrain from obscene, indecent, violent or disorderly conduct while on the program. Students shall also refrain from perpetrating any form of sexual harassment, or engaging in any self-endangering behaviors. In addition, students shall refrain from any other conduct likely to bring the U.S. State Department or CIEE into notoriety or disrepute.

20. Any material that a student publishes on the internet (such as on social networking sites or blogs) that violates Program Rules will be grounds for student dismissal.

21. 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.

22. 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).
CIEE Policies for Students

In addition to the Program Rules for students, there are also Program Policies that both you and your student should be aware of.

Continuing Academic Study in the U.S.
The CIEE USA High School Program is a five- or ten-month academic program. All participants receive J-1 Visa sponsorship through CIEE for a maximum of ten months. Each student’s program terminates two weeks after their school end date. At this time, all host family responsibility, supervision, and medical insurance end. CIEE advises that students depart the U.S. at this time.

During their exchange program, many students express interest in pursuing future study in the U.S., 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 U.S. colleges and universities. While CIEE supports the academic interests of exchange students, it is important that the focus of their program remains dedicated to their current host family, friends, and school. Students who devote excessive time to their studies and college applications risk distancing their host families, teachers and peers, and ultimately, creating problems within the home and at school. 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.

Curfew
Acceptable curfews vary depending upon social customs in your area. Your family should decide what your weekday and weekend curfews are and make this very clear to your student. Also explain why there are curfews, since this idea is not known in many countries. If your family does not have teenagers and is unfamiliar with what are generally accepted standards, you might ask a family with teens or your Local Coordinator for guidance.

Discipline
The CIEE USA High School Program has an established disciplinary process that begins with issuing the student a verbal warning. The next step in the disciplinary process is a written warning. The student will be placed on probation if the problem continues, and will be dismissed as a last measure. In very rare and extreme cases, students who break program rules may be dismissed immediately. Your Local Coordinator will work together with CIEE to establish the disciplinary steps to take with a student, will keep you informed of the progress, and will depend on you for feedback. In order for the disciplinary process to work, open communication must be maintained between you and your Local Coordinator regarding any and all concerns or issues that you may have.

Departure
All students should be in possession of a return international ticket. This may be open or have a return date that can be changed for a nominal fee that the student is responsible for paying. Often times, students enter the U.S. with only a one-way domestic ticket from their gateway city in the U.S. to the host community. Students are responsible for purchasing a one-way domestic ticket for their return. Two months prior to the completion of school, the
student should reserve a seat on both the domestic and international leg of his/her return flights. International flights book far in advance, so it is a good idea for your student to have a few dates in mind and to call the airline as soon as possible to guarantee a seat. Once the international flight is booked, your student should arrange a departure date for his/her domestic trip. Please refer to program rule #13 as to when students should depart.

Driving
Please refer to program rule #10 in regard to student driving.

Emergencies
In the event of an emergency it is important to notify the appropriate program contacts immediately. The host family should first call the Local Coordinator who will, in turn, call the Portland Office. In the event that the family cannot reach the LC, they should call the Portland Office directly. CIEE assumes responsibility for notifying our overseas representative, who will contact the student’s natural parents.

The “Agreement and release form,” signed by the student’s natural parents and included in the application, enables the host family or designated representatives of CIEE to make emergency medical decisions on your student’s behalf. Host families receive a copy of this form and should have it with them in the event of emergency treatment or if admission to a hospital is required. U.S. hospitals can refuse treatment without this form.

Employment
Students are in the United States on a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa and are not permitted to work in what are considered competitive jobs or to work more than ten hours a week. However, students may do sporadic work such as babysitting, lawn mowing, and other informal opportunities to earn pocket money. Students are not expected to provide extensive child care for the host family.

Family Visits
Please refer to program rule #9. Host families are not required to host their student’s natural family if a visit is arranged. You should also feel comfortable setting the dates for a visit around a time that is good for your family and the student’s school schedule.

Insurance
All students are covered by medical insurance for accidents and illnesses. In most cases, students are insured by the company which provides insurance for the many participants of other CIEE programs. In some cases, insurance is provided by a company in the student’s homeland. Either way, your student will have policy information, written in English, which will indicate his/her insurer and contain information on how to process a claim. In all cases, the coverage meets or exceeds the standards established by the State Department for participants on Exchange Visitor Programs. CIEE employs an insurance coordinator to assist students with claims.

Internet Use
It is tempting for students to spend hours online, communicating with friends and family back home and keeping up with events in their home countries. CIEE encourages host
families to establish clear guidelines on Internet use as soon as the student has arrived. Clearly explain time restrictions and acceptable content guidelines. Likewise, outline the consequences of abusing these guidelines (i.e. limited/no Internet access, etc.) While it is normal to want to be in daily contact with home, this makes the adjustment to life in the United States much more difficult and leaves the student “living with one foot in the USA and one in his/her home country” and, likewise, alienates his/her host family. Thus, it is very important to establish Internet guidelines from the very beginning. However, the student should have reasonable access to their natural parents and family by telephone and email.

Legal Status
CIEE USA High School Program participants are subject to the national and local laws of the United States. Host families are not legal guardians. However, as stated previously, families are empowered to make medical decisions in the event of an emergency.

Smoking
Please refer to program rule #12.

Travel
Please refer to program rule #9. International travel, with the exception of Mexico or Canada, is discouraged by CIEE and the U.S. State Department.

Visas
The CIEE USA High School Program is designated by the U.S. State Department as an official Exchange Visitor Program (P3-2655). As such, we are empowered to issue the DS-2019 Form with which a foreign student can secure a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. Neither host high school nor host family has any visa responsibility. The J-1 Visa enables the student to stay in the United States for a period of five or ten months, provided he or she is living with a host family and is enrolled in high school. The visa permits multiple entries to the United States so that the student may visit Canada or Mexico, for example, and re-enter the country. But, you or your Local Coordinator should always check with the necessary embassy or consulate to ensure that your student does not require an additional visa to travel within these countries.

SEVIS Compliance
The CIEE main office will register all students upon arrival to their host family in accordance with U.S. Department of State regulations.
CIEE Thanks You!

Thank you for your decision to host a student. If you have hosted before and have been doing this for many years now we thank you and value your commitment to this wonderful endeavor.

You will expand your family’s cultural horizons and have an unforgettable experience.

The students that decide to go on an exchange are doing something astonishing; they strive to find out about their world by leaving all things familiar behind and trek into a new landscape, family, and school. Our great reward is to help them accomplish new things and experience the American culture.

Once again, thank you for your commitment,

USA High School Staff
USA High School Program

The CIEE USA High School program began in 1995 in response to the need to offer a quality program for international students to participate in American high schools and interact with host families and communities for five or ten months. The CIEE USA High School program has grown from a handful of students and countries to include more than 55 nationalities represented in a group of over 1,300 students each year.

The CIEE USA High School program is designated by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor our students on a J-1 visa to attend high school in America. We are also approved by the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET).

Other CIEE Opportunities

» High School and Gap Year Abroad programs for American high school students and graduates in 11 counties.

» The Congress-Bundestag Scholarship program offering 50 highly competitive scholarships to high school students from the American Southeast to live with a host family and attend school in Germany for one year.

» Study Abroad programs for students attending university in America—over 125 programs in more than 40 countries.

» The South Korea Scholarship—a full scholarship program immersing American high school and university students in Korean culture for short term culture programs over school breaks.

» Teach Abroad programs in seven countries for anyone with a BA/BS, native English skills, and enthusiasm for learning.

What will your family’s story be with CIEE?

Visit www.ciee.org to find out more.