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#### **PtP Guidelines for High School Exchange in USA**

#### **Introduction**

Hosting an overseas student can be a tremendously rewarding experience for a family. It is also a large responsibility and the following document aims to help you as host families with your hosting experience. An exchange student becomes one of the family during the exchange and their host family is responsible for supervising the school and leisure time activities and including them in family activities as if the student were their own child. To ensure the best possible experience for all involved, we recommend that the host family and the student’s family keep in regular contact to discuss any questions or issues that may arise during the exchange.

**Household Chores & Expectations**
Each family is different and has different rules for their children. As the exchange student becomes “one of the family”, we suggest that the same family rules regarding household chores also apply for the exchange student. As soon as a student is settled in, we would recommend that the new host parents have a detailed discussion with the student and talk about the house rules so that student will know what is expected of him/her and so that misunderstandings can be avoided later.

**Schooling**
The Exchange Program rules require attendance at a high school. Usually the host family will take care of the enrollment details and arrange a meeting with the school to determine the best classes, etc. The host family’s role is to supervise the day-to-day attendance of the student at school and encourage them to participate fully in both the academic and extra-curricular activities of the school. Exchange students are not exempt from homework assignments or projects and are expected to make an honest effort to succeed in schoolwork and skipping classes or leaving school early is not allowed.

**Communication with Home & Homesickness**Every student experiences homesickness to some degree and the extent of this problem will depend largely on the student’s own background and personality. It is important for the student to communicate with the host family if they are struggling. The more a student participates in school, family, community and extra-curricular activities, the less likely they will have adjustment issues or homesickness. It is also important to help the student acclimate to the Midwest time zone as quickly as possible.

**Host family expenses**Host families are responsible for providing their exchange student with their meals, transportation and a clean and safe living environment. We recommend having a discussion with the student and their family before or at the beginning of the exchange to talk about which expenses are covered by the host family and which expenses are paid by the exchange student and their family. Helping your student understand their monthly expenses and what they are responsible for will set you both up for a healthy relationship.

We would suggest that the host families cover the following expenses:

* Meals and snacks
* Utilities/Housing
* Transportation - may need to take school bus or walk if near school
* Household toiletries
* Family activities and eating out together

Some families may want to cover more than this but that is their choice and not to be expected. Upfront communication between host parents and German parents is key to success.

A general rule-of-thumb is that the host family pays for the guest student during all family activities and if the student wants to buy something on his/her own then the guest student pays.

**Student expenses**

Students are expected to cover their personal expenses while on the exchange. They will likely bring a credit card, debit card or pre-paid card from back home. Students may experience some challenges using their foreign cards in local retailers especially at first, so it is best that they also carry some cash.

When planning activities outside the family that come with a cost, talk with your student about the expenses and ensure that they have enough in their budget to participate. As students usually have little experience managing and budgeting money, your guidance may be appreciated here. If they do not have the funds to participate in a certain activity, discuss lower cost options or bring German parents into the discussion. Students are expected to cover:

* Personal toiletries and cosmetics, haircut, manicure, pedicure
* Phone plan
* Clothes (special event like Homecoming attire, sports uniforms/shoes are included here)
* Entertainment — time with friends such as concerts, school dances, museums, entry fees, movies, coffee dates, miniature golf, etc.
* Holiday gifts
* Additional food costs beyond what is provided with three meals a day or if student does not want to eat what the family is eating or is eating out with friends - including snacks, candy, etc.
* School fees & school supplies (includes school pictures/portraits, yearbooks, etc.)
* Sports and Extracurricular fees (in school or outside lessons, classes, team photos, sports physical, camps, rental of uniform for sport, band and/or choir, field trip, etc.)
* Medical expenses - pay upfront and seek reimbursement with medical records/bills in Germany (Host family should not cover)

**How much should students budget per month?**

Students are encouraged to budget $250-300 per month during the exchange. Prior to their arrival, it is helpful to provide a list of monthly expenses, such as their cell phone plan and toiletries, as well as any one-time fees they should be aware of such as homecoming/prom expenses, additional school fees or tickets to local events. Additional expenses to consider include (estimates):

* School fees and school supplies: $150
* School excursions and trips: $50 - 100
* Sports Extracurricular fees
	+ Sports Physical $80
	+ $25 to 40 participation fee per sport or activity - paid to school
	+ Uniforms - rental fee or may need to purchase depending on school
	+ Shoes - depends on sport
* Cell phone service: $20-$50/month
* Personal expenses (shopping, movies, nights out, etc.): $300/month

As previously mentioned, when hosting an international student, it is important to have a clear discussion with the student and their families about which expenses the student is responsible for and which expenses are covered by the host family. That will help to avoid any financial misunderstandings and allow everyone to focus on what really matters: spending time together, exploring your community, exchanging cultures, trading languages, and having fun.