

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Students

### **Q. What are the primary expectations of the Homestay Students?**

**A.** Students are expected to **RESPECT** others, authority, self and property. All our schools expect our students to be personally **RESPONSIBLE** for their own behavior and learning, exercising self-control over their actions and words. All students are expected to follow their school rules, willingly devote themselves to learning, and fulfill their household responsibilities without being asked or reminded regardless of whether they will be held accountable for their actions. All our students are expected to respond to both correction and consequences with a repentant attitude when correction is necessary.

### **Q. Where will I live?**

**A.** Unless special permission is granted by the administration of your assigned school, all students are required to live throughout the school year with at least one parent or legal guardian or with an approved homestay family of Venture International Academy (VIA) or participating school.

### **Q. When with students that speak the same language as I do, am I allowed to hold a conversation with that student in my language?**

**A.** English should be the only language used in ANY setting where others are present who do not speak the language. In order to effectively foster a learning environment for students learning English, this policy is strictly enforced at all our schools and is subject to disciplinary action by the deans of their school. This means that conversations occurring at school in the presence of others who do not speak the same language should occur in English (cafeteria/dining hall, lunch, hallways, classrooms, chapel, etc...).

Students may seek special permission from a classroom teacher **ONLY** to speak in their native language if they believe the situation warrants it. Teachers have the authority to grant or deny this permission to the students.

### **Q. Am I allowed to have a cell phone?**

**A.** The student is responsible to discuss with the home stay family whether or not the use of a cell phone is expected or preferred. The student is responsible to pay for his or her own cell phone plan and/or use. Some home stay families may prefer to add the student to the family cell phone plan. In this event, the student maintains the responsibility to pay for his or her share of the family cell phone bill including the devices and accessories. Any exceptions to this must be negotiated with the home stay family directly.

The student should discuss the purchase of any cell phone plan, device, and/or accessories with the homestay family prior to making such a purchase. Many U.S. companies require a two-year commitment, though there are also prepaid phones and alternative plans that allow an individual to purchase minutes as needed. The student should discuss any purchases in advance with the home stay family before signing up for any agreement.

**Q. What should I do if I am having an issue with a member(s) of the host family?**

**A.** First try speaking to the parent of the host family. If the issue is still not resolved, contact your community counselor to help get the issue resolved.

**Q. What kind of clothing should I bring?**

**A.** Modest attire by the student is expected at all times at all of our schools, whether at home or at school.

They should consult their schools' student handbook for specific guidelines regarding dress at school and school-related functions. Failure to comply with their schools and the home stay family's expectations will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the schools' handbook.

When in the home or involved in family life, students should dress in a manner consistent with home stay parent expectations. Home stay parents reserve the right to decide what is acceptable or unacceptable dress while living with their family. Students should always be sensitive to other members of the household as well as to family values. Clothing is to be purchased by the student and is not the responsibility of the home stay family to purchase clothes for the student. However, any clothing purchased and worn should be consistent with family and school guidelines.

**Q. Will I have to do chores?**

**A.** The student may be expected to participate in the family domestic structure, including assigned chores around the home. The student is not to be a servant to the home, but is to act with a heart of service to others in the home by doing what is expected to help around the home stay. The student should offer to assist with duties such as washing dishes, cleaning their room, doing laundry, etc. Some families may assign specific household duties such as washing dishes, cleaning their room, doing laundry, etc. Some families may assign specific household duties to each child in the home.

**Q. Will I have to cook my own food?**

**A.** Students should expect to be provided two-three meals per day by their home stay families, including lunch on school days. Students must make lunch arrangements with their home stay families upon their arrival to the home. Some families may choose to send a bag lunch with their students while other schools may provide lunch at the school. Students may be expected to pay for their own lunch at school unless they pack a lunch at the home stay. Home stay families are only expected to provide a reasonable amount of food for the student's school lunch. Students who eat large quantities of food should expect to assist their home stay family in buying some of their own food or using personal funds to help purchase lunches at school.

When home stay families eat together, the student is expected to participate in the meal as a family member. Students may volunteer to help prepare some meals for the family and may request specific food on occasion.

**Q. How often will I be allowed to shower?**

**A.** Personal hygiene is extremely important to the American culture. People shower each day in the morning or in the evening. Brushing of the teeth and using mouthwash is done in the morning and at night before bed. Underarm deodorant is commonly worn to maintain a pleasant smell. Cologne or perfumes are used in moderation to help oneself smell good. Students should wash their clothes regularly and be attentive to keeping themselves clean.

**Q. Will I have a curfew?**

**A.** Students are expected to follow their home stay family's bedtimes as well as respect quiet or study hours in the home. Students should understand that each family may vary in expectations regarding study or quiet hours and bedtimes. Some families require students to be in bed with lights out by a specific time in the evening. Students are to respect whatever the family requirements are for their home stay. Any exceptions to the family's policy regarding study or quiet hours and bedtimes must be discussed in advance directly with the home stay parents.

**Q. Am I allowed to have visitors?**

**A.** Home stay parents must grant permission in advance in order for the student to host visitors. Visitors of the opposite gender cannot stay overnight under any circumstances and are not allowed in the student's bedroom area. Out of town visitors (parents, siblings, family, and friends) are expected to obtain their own lodging outside of the home stay home unless the home stay parents specifically invite the visitors to stay in their home.

**Q. Am I allowed to "Date"?**

**A.** Home stay students age 16 and younger are limited to dating in group-type activities where three (3) or more students meet somewhere like a park, a restaurant, an approved activity, or school-sponsored function. Students are not granted the privilege on no-group dates simply because of age. Each student must earn the privilege by demonstrating responsibility in the area of relationships.

**Q. Am I allowed to possess or drive a vehicle while in the program?**

**A.** At many of our school's students are not allowed to possess or drive a vehicle while in the home stay program. Transportation of the home stay student should be provided by the home stay family or local transportation if the home is within the city. If the student is traveling with the home stay family,

this requires advanced planning on the student's part as the home stay family needs to plan ahead to meet the needs of all family members. Home stay students may only ride in vehicles driven by their home stay family, or a student driver from their personal home stay home, or another school or home stay. Students who desire to pursue a Driver's License within the state they live in may do so **ONLY** with the express written consent of their parent, home stay parents, approval by their schools' administration, and must be a senior. Students who are approved to pursue a Driver's License must make appropriate arrangements with their home stay parents to enroll in an approved driver training course. **Students may not own or possess a personal vehicle while enrolled at any of our private home stay or boarding schools.**

Students who have a license are required to surrender their license to their home stay parents or school administration during the time in which they are participating at the school.

family approved driver. Home stay students are not permitted to ride with any other drivers with the express permission of their home stay parents.

**Q. Am I allowed to play sports?**

**A.** Many of our schools have State Athletic associations that may prohibit international students from participating in school affiliated athletic contests during the students first year of school. There are also schools where you will not be able to participate on the sports team if you are late more than 2 weeks from the first day of school. Before attempting to apply to participate at your school for sports, discuss your options with your school's athletic coach or school administration.

**Q. Can I work while on an F-1 visa?**

**A.** No. International Students on an F-1 visa are not allowed to work in the United States off campus. If an international student is considering employment, that student must first consult with your school's administration to ensure that any such work would not endanger his or her visa status. Many of our schools do not offer employment to students during the school year. However, several of our schools will allow private tutoring. Homestay parents are discouraged from seeking any employment for you and should not do so without the express permission of the school's administration.

**Please remember that the F-1 Visa must be signed every year!**

**Q. Am I allowed to travel on my own?**

**A. PLEASE NOTE THAT NO STUDENT MAY TRAVEL WITHOUT AN ADULT CHAPARONE (CHAPARONE MUST BE OVER 25 YEARS OF AGE).**

Students wishing to travel on their own or ingroups during an official school break instead of remaining or traveling with their home stay families must submit a signed Parental Permission for Travel form at least one month (4 weeks) prior to the beginning of the school's break.

**Q. Do I have to attend church?**

**A.** Students are required to attend church with their homestay families at many of our private homestay schools. Some families may choose to attend church functions on a more frequent basis than others. Students may be expected to attend church and church-related functions in a manner that is consistent with family expectations. Students are not to make alternative arrangements for church without first consulting with their homestay parents. Students should be attending the same church as their homestay families. Students who wish to visit other churches on occasion may seek permission from their homestay parents and must make appropriate arrangements with their homestay parents. At many of our schools, Church attendance should be regular and is not optional.

**Q. Am I allowed to drink alcohol/smoke/use illegal drugs?**

**A. NO.** The purchase and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone under the age of twenty-one (21) is a violation of United States law and grounds for immediate termination from the Venture International Academy program. Students may be accustomed to drinking and going to night clubs at a younger age because it is allowed in the home country. If a student is caught or suspected to be drinking, the home stay or the community counselor should be contacted immediately.

United States law restricts the purchase and use of cigarettes to any person under the age of 18. Smoking is not permitted by the school or by the home stay family. If a student is caught or suspected of smoking, the CEO, Regional Director, Community Counselor, or school administrator should be notified.

If a student is found to be in possession of an illegal drug, or found to be in use of drugs, the student will be asked to leave the school, home stay, and our agency immediately. The use of illegal drugs will not be permitted what so ever.

**Q. Are firearms/weapons allowed?**

**A. NO.** Students are not permitted to use or own firearms while attending school. Some students may have had the experience using a firearm and desire to go to a shooting range. This kind of activity is not permitted while students are enrolled at the school. If a student uses a firearm, Venture International Academy should be contacted immediately.

Students are not permitted to have any type of weapon in the home or school. Students are not permitted to purchase any type of weapon while in the United States. If a student is found to be in violation of this policy, he/she will receive disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from their participating school. If a student is unsure whether an item would be considered a weapon, he or she should consult their home stay parents or school administration.

## SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In case of an emergency where you will need either or all, medical, police, fire rescue, etc., PLEASE DIAL 911.

Please search for your local non-emergency numbers as well and make sure to have it posted somewhere for everyone to find easily.

The numbers below are some national hotlines for specific problems should you want/need to contact them:

Poison Control	1-800-222-1222	Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-8255
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-422-4453	Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800-656-4673
Student Crime Stoppers	1-800-873-8477		

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Please have your **community counselor's contact information** on hand in the event of an emergency you can contact your community counselor.

### SAFETY

Students are required to wear appropriate safety equipment when riding bicycles, scooters, skateboards, etc. or when participating in activities that typically require some safety equipment to be worn.

School administrator reserves the right to conduct a search of all personal property belonging to the student both in the home and at school. Home stay parents may confiscate any item that is forbidden. The student's natural parents will be notified of any searches in a timely manner, and students can be present at the time of the search. Searches are to be conducted by no less than two members of the administration. Students who refuse to have a search conducted may be dismissed from their school and sent home to their native country immediately.