

CAPISTRANO VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND HOMESTAY HANDBOOK



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Introduction

Our Mission is to provide educational excellence in a Christ-centered environment. Our Vision is to be recognized for developing leaders prepared to impact our world for Christ through effective academic and educational practices based on a Biblical worldview.

OUR CORE VALUES:

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Biblically-based experiences that equip a student for a life-long, maturing relationship with Jesus Christ.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

A Biblical, accredited curriculum that prepares the student for the challenges of higher education and life-long learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Athletic and educational programs that foster a Christ-like attitude towards competition and sportsmanship.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

An academic community that models Christian character, conduct, accountability, and service.

1. GUIDING RULES

Parents who are investing in an international education for their children expect that they will behave well and will act in a manner that reflects well on their family and country. It is important that you remember this expectation and honor your parents in doing the very best that you can.

You must carefully read these Guidelines and CVCS Student Handbook as they set forth the code of conduct, disciplinary rules, and obligations of a CVCS student. You should know that some violations of the Guidelines and/or CVCS Student Handbook may result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. To the extent that any one of the Guidelines conflicts with any policy in the Student Handbook, you should comply with the Guidelines. If you or your parents have any questions about any Guideline or Handbook policy, you should speak to a school administrator.

You should also read and follow the Uniform Policy of CVCS. You should seek guidance from your host parents for the appropriate attire. You will be required to purchase at your own cost the uniform that is required for school.

LIFE IN AMERICA

2. ARRIVAL

As you come to the United States, keep in mind these points:

- Many things will be different during your stay in North America.
- Relax and enjoy the differences.
- Be open about your feelings. They are probably not unusual or shameful, so you have no reason to hide them! Share your feelings with your friends, your host family, and the Director of International Students.
- Seek new experiences. You will make the most of your time by embracing your new culture and host family. Be willing to try new things (especially food) and go to new places.
- Keep a strong sense of your own values and culture.

Upon arrival, you will probably be tired from jet lag. You may be homesick. At the same time, you will be excited and eager to begin your new life. Your host family and CVCS may have a lot planned for you. Care for yourself during this period. Remember you will be nervous and tired. In particular, take naps when you feel tired and expect some irregular sleep patterns. You should call home to let your family know you have arrived safely.

3. AMERICAN CUSTOMS

Americans have a number of customs that may seem different to you:

- Americans often leave for work and school early. They tend to have dinner earlier than other countries, generally around 6 p.m., and go to bed around 10 or 11 p.m. Dinner is not eaten whenever you get home; it's at the scheduled time. Often on weekends everything happens a bit later.
- People in America go to their own bedrooms when they are tired, when they have work to do, or when they want to be alone. Don't feel that you have to remain with the family in the general living area until your host parents go off to their bedroom. Feel free to go to your own room when you want.
- Don't routinely close the door to your room. Doors tend to be left open unless a person wants privacy. A closed door, therefore, signals that you don't want any interruptions. When a door is closed and you want to talk to someone inside that room, politely knock on the door and wait for them to let you in.
- It's customary to leave the bathroom door open when nobody is inside. When using the bathroom, close and lock the door. When you are finished using the bathroom,

make sure the toilet seat is down.

- You are expected to be on time for appointments and classes. Attendance at school is mandatory.
- It's not considered impolite to show your teeth while laughing. Most people will laugh out loud and show their teeth if something is very funny.
- Pierced ears are common for women but are against CVCS rules for men. Women don't necessarily put on make-up every day. It's their choice or may depend on what they are doing that day.
- Americans are more likely to cross in the middle of the street rather than at an intersection and to cross at the intersection even when the light is red. This is known as "jaywalking" and is illegal. It's a custom you should NOT adopt because it is very dangerous.
- It is common to use tissues or a handkerchief rather than sniffing in public.
- Striking someone you have an argument with is not acceptable and is illegal. Students who hit other students may be expelled from school.
- It is illegal to urinate in public.

4. POLITENESS

- It is important to show the same respect to your host parents that you would show to your own parents.
- It's considered polite to say, "Good morning," when you see people in the morning. In the evening, tell your host family, "Good night." When you are going to your room, don't just get up and leave. In addition, it is polite to say hello to whoever is home when you enter the house.
- When entering a house, you should remove your shoes.
- People shake hands when meeting an adult for the first time. They do not bow.
- If people already know each other, they will generally just say, "Hi," the next time they meet. If they are particularly close and have not seen one another in a while, men may shake hands with each other. Women in this situation may hug. For a man and a woman, it depends on how close they are and their style. Sometimes they will shake hands and sometimes hug.
- When addressing an adult, always use the appropriate title (Mr., Miss, or Mrs.) unless they have specifically asked you to call them by their first name.
- Leaving others in routine situations is simple. A person will say, "Bye" or "See you

later,” or will sometimes say something like, “Talk to you soon” or even, “I’ll talk to you later.” They don’t necessarily mean that literally, and you should not feel insulted or hurt if they don’t call in the next few hours or days.

- If you bump into someone by accident, say, “Sorry” or “Excuse me,” to be polite.
- Hold swinging and heavy doors for other people who are following you in and out of them.
- If you see someone struggling to carry something, offer to help them carry it if you can.
- If you are preparing tea, coffee, or a snack for yourself, ask others if they would like some as well.
- When you are a guest somewhere, it is common to be asked what you would like to drink. Sometimes the host will indicate what is available. If not, kindly ask, “Do you have _____?”
- Clerks, waiters, taxi drivers, and secretaries should be treated courteously.

5. COMMUNICATION

Americans are normally quite direct. They use very little flattery, and they prize honesty. They get to the point quickly. They don’t look to other people to solve their problems but generally try to work them out themselves.

- Generally, people stand two to three feet apart from each other when talking. They may use many physical gestures.
- Americans maintain eye contact when speaking, but the contact should not be too intense. The pattern is to establish eye contact and then periodically look aside before returning to eye contact.
- In public places, you may have to adjust your voice level, speaking either quieter or louder. Take your cue from the tones of other people.
- You will find Americans uncomfortable with silence. They will generally rush to fill the gap by saying something or asking a question.
- In America, smiling and giggling usually convey happiness or amusement—not confusion or embarrassment. Since you are learning a new language and may not understand some things, giggling may convey the wrong signal. The best approach is to say that you’re having trouble understanding.
- Americans often show they are puzzled by frowning or tightening their forehead and eyes. If you smile or giggle in these situations, the message will be missed.
- People often talk to one another without being formally introduced.

- In some cultures, people show appreciation for food by making a lot of noises. In America, however, making loud noises while eating is considered rude. Americans try to eat without smacking or slurping noises. If something tastes good, tell the cook or chef that you liked it.

6. HOST FAMILY LIFE

It is important that you not expect everything to be wonderful when you first meet your host family. This can be an awkward period with everyone feeling a little anxious. Allow adjustment time. **If you are feeling homesick, try to concentrate on what you like or can be thankful for about this new situation.** Personalize your room immediately, putting out your own pictures and mementos.

RIGHTS

- You have the right to expect decent food and a clean room with comfortable furniture, a closet, a window that opens, internet access, and adequate lighting. You will probably share the bathroom with other members of the household.
- You have the right to privacy. Others should not enter your room when the door is closed. They should knock first and await your permission before entering.
- You have **NO** right to smoke, drink alcohol, or play loud music.
- If something seems uncomfortable—perhaps you are being asked to watch the children too frequently—talk it over with your host family or the International Program Director.
- You have the right to reasonable use of laundry facilities. This is typically two to three loads done once a week subject to your host family guidelines.
- Your host family should prepare dinner for you daily. They will also ask you what types of food you like and have these in the home after they grocery shop, usually once or twice a week.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- You should be easy to get along with.
- Members of the host family are not your servants. You are responsible to keep your room clean. **You are also responsible to clean the areas you use, particularly the kitchen, study area, and bathroom.** Do not leave clothes or other personal belongings all over the house.
- Never take food or drinks into your bedroom.
- You should be home in time for dinner or advise your host family in advance if you will not be there.
- Treat your host family's property with respect. You could be held responsible for damages.
- You should follow the family's schedule. For example, don't expect to watch television at 3 a.m. or to do laundry or cook meals whenever you want.
- Ask permission in advance to bring a friend home or to go out with friends.
- Do not leave without getting permission in advance and informing your host family where you are going.
- You should respect the family's privacy.
- You should not use the family's DVD or other electronic equipment without permission.

- You should attend religious services with your host family. It is a special time for the family to be together and a great opportunity to learn more about American culture and improve your English skills. CVCS requires attendance at church or youth group at least 2 times per month.
- Host family assignments are made for the entire school year. Every effort should be made to resolve any problems with your host family.

EXPECTATIONS

The following are some of the things expected of each student:

- **Be Independent.** Clean up after yourself, show initiative, and ask your host family if you have any questions.
- **Be Direct.** Talk about any problems you may be experiencing that your host family can help you with. Do not worry about making mistakes using English.
- **Be Friendly.** Participate in family activities on a regular basis. Do not always go to your room and close the door or spend excessive amounts of time playing video games with your friends instead of interacting with your host family. Initiate conversations with your host family and be willing to share your experiences with them.
- **Show Respect.** Abide by common courtesies such as asking how late and how loudly you can listen to music or watch TV, etc. Be sure to respect the family's need for quiet periods.
- **Be Polite.** Use good etiquette such as saying "please" when making a request and "thank you" after someone has helped you. In English, it is polite to use the phrase, "would like." For example, it is more polite to say, "I would like to take a shower," than, "I want to take a shower." It is always better to ask permission to do something than to assume you are allowed to do it.
- **Respect House Rules.** Always obey house rules. Your host family will go over these rules when you first move in. You should keep a copy of the rules and refer to them often. If you are unsure of any of the rules or if there is a problem, talk with your host parents.
- **Get Involved.** You need to make an effort to get involved in the CVCS community and the local community. This can be done by attending and participating in school, church, or community events. You should NOT spend all your time with other international students and should seek guidance from your host parents and school personnel when choosing friends.
- **Learn about Christianity.** You are expected to learn about the Christian faith, respect the Christian faith of those around you, and adhere to the guidelines for Christian living as set forth in CVCS Student Handbook.

6. CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS

In life, we can always expect conflicts because we are not all the same. We all have conflicts in our regular families. So it is likely that you and your host family will also have conflicts at some point. It is not disgraceful to have a conflict. It is important, however, to be open about the conflict if it is serious and persists. The key to avoiding conflicts and ending them is communication. You must talk about the conflict. That is hard when the conflict is with your host family, because you may feel like a guest in their house and your English skills are not equal to theirs. You should try, however, to resolve the conflict within the family. If you feel you cannot resolve it, talk to the International Program Director. Often, you will find conflicts result from misunderstandings. For example, you may feel your host family doesn't spend enough time with you. Maybe they said something that hurt your feelings. You may be surprised at how much meat they eat and want more rice and vegetables. They cannot try to correct the problem if you do not communicate your concerns. Your host family wants to please you. If you raise problems or concerns, they will try to help you, but they are not mind readers: **communicate your concerns.**

If there is a problem with your host family, you must seek to resolve the problem first through direct discussion with your host family. If you and your host family are unable to resolve the problem, you and your host family may seek assistance from the Homestay Local Coordinator or Community Counselor. To protect the privacy of all parties involved, you should refrain from discussing problems of a personal nature with others except your host family, the LC or CC, and/or your parents. If you are experiencing any sort of relational stress, difficulty, abuse, or harassment of any kind, you must immediately report it to the International Program Director. However, even if you are experiencing hardship, you are not allowed to change host families or sleep over at your friend's house without prior approval from the LC or CC. **Only your LC or CC can reassign you to another host family.**

7. BATHROOM

- **A daily shower is common.** Daily shaving is expected for men unless they have a beard. Most people use **deodorant** because the smell of body odor is not acceptable in American culture. They brush and floss their teeth every morning and evening and sometimes after every meal. Those with a tendency towards bad breath use mouthwash.
- **Bathroom floors do not have drains. Keep the water in the sink and in the bathtub. Place the shower curtain inside the bathtub when showering. Dry off INSIDE the tub before getting out.**
- Generally, a shower should last no longer than 10 minutes. Late night showers, although common in some other countries, should be avoided because it is

considered impolite to awaken someone with the noise from the running water.

- In America, water from a bath is not shared between people. Empty the tub when finished.
- Remove all loose hair from the bottom of the sink or the tub before leaving the bathroom so as not to clog the drain. Put it in a wastebasket. Do not remove the drain stopper from the sink or tub.
- Every person in the family home shares in the duty of cleaning up. When you use the bathroom, make sure that you clean up after yourself. Wipe up water spills, hang towels, and wash out the sink and shower/tub.
- Clothing should not give off unpleasant smells. Change your clothes daily, especially when they may smell of perspiration. Wash the clothes you wear each week.
- In America, you use toilet tissue to cleanse after using the toilet. The tissue is thrown into the toilet and flushed. Do not put used, soiled toilet tissues in the trash can. Flush it down the toilet.
- Women use either tampons or sanitary napkins for menstruation. Wrap these in toilet tissue and then throw these away in a garbage can after use – do not flush them down the toilet as this will damage the plumbing and you may be held responsible for any repairs.
- Basic hygiene products will be provided by the host family. Special needs or wants will be your responsibility.
- Have your host family show you how to shut off the water to the toilet. If the toilet becomes clogged, this will prevent it from overflowing and will avoid a mess.
- Notify your host family immediately if there are any water problems in the bathroom.

8. BEDROOM

Your host family is required to provide a separate bed for you, storage space for your personal items, and access to a bathroom. Your bed cannot be placed in an open area such as a family room or furnished basement unless expressed permission has been given for this by your host family or homestay agency. Additionally, you will be provided with adequate storage for clothing and a quiet study area consisting of a desk or table, chair, and adequate lighting to read by. Sometimes this study area will be in a public place such as the dining room or living room.

9. KITCHEN

Most host family parents provide breakfast and dinner. During the school/work week, breakfasts are informal since everyone quickly eats something before leaving for the day. The food will be very different from what you are accustomed to and the manner of eating will

probably be different, too. If you need to take a lunch from home, be independent and make your own well before it is time to leave for school. Ask your host parents to show you how and what is available. Most students take a bag lunch (a sandwich or leftovers in a plastic container along with a drink and snack.) Make sure that you pack enough for lunch so that you do not get hungry. You can always purchase food at school for lunch if you like, at your own cost.

Dinner will be more like what you may be accustomed to, in the sense that everybody tries to eat dinner together and a parent usually cooks. It may be much earlier than you are accustomed to and sometimes may be rushed if family members have other events or activities planned for the evening. It is your responsibility to be home for dinner on time. Do not expect your host mother to be patiently waiting with dinner still warm if you arrive later. Instead, you will have to reheat any left-overs or prepare your own dinner.

You are entitled to eat reasonable amounts of food. You share the available food with everyone else. Once everyone has been served, you may ask for more food if you are still hungry and there is food still available. It is not considered rude to ask for more after everyone has been served.

Food is generally passed around the table. Do not reach over someone to grab food or the salt and pepper. Politely ask others to hand it to you. Say, "Please pass the ___," or "May I have some ___?" If it's the last portion, ask, "Does anyone else want any ___?" The food may be very different from what you have at home. The initial smell and sight of the food may make it difficult for you to eat it. Remember, trying new foods is part of the host family experience. Be adventurous and open-minded. Adjust to your host family's diet. If certain dishes are unpleasant and others are acceptable, tell your host family so they can try to accommodate you. If you like certain food or beverage that the family doesn't use, you may request it or buy it yourself.

It is very appropriate to ask your host parents to take you to a local market that sells your home country's food. You may also volunteer to cook a meal for your family. Do not cook for yourself regularly. That will insult your host family and could prevent them from using the kitchen at key times.

You should feel free to use the refrigerator, and your host family should provide space in the pantry where you can store your own food items. You are entitled to take light snacks designated for anyone in the family when you have the urge. Any personal items not intended for other family members should be clearly marked to ensure they are not consumed by someone else. You should ask for assistance initially in preparing breakfast and lunch. Here are some pointers:

Breakfast:

- Cereal is common for breakfast. The family will generally have a few types available—and you may want to join them in food-shopping to help choose. The cereal is placed in a bowl and cold milk is poured over it. Some people like to slice up some fruit—an apple, peach, or a banana—and put that into the bowl as well. Some also add sugar, although many cereals come pre-sweetened.
- Toast (heated bread) or frozen waffles are also common at breakfast. A toaster or toaster oven is used to heat these items. If you are unfamiliar with these devices, ask for help.
- More elaborate breakfasts involving eggs or pancakes should be reserved for weekends when there is more time to make breakfast and clean up. If necessary, ask somebody to show you how to cook them.
- The normal drinks for breakfast are coffee, tea, and juice.

Preparing Rice: You may prefer to make rice for breakfast or lunch, if that is your custom. In America, it is cooked with water in a saucepan (a saucepan is a pot with high sides; a skillet has low sides) or a rice steamer.

Making Sandwiches: Sandwiches generally involve these items: bread, a spread, and the main ingredient.

- Bread can vary widely and you should experiment to find your favorites. Different bread will taste better with different combinations of food.
- The spreads generally put on sandwiches are butter, mayonnaise, cream cheese, honey, mustard, or ketchup. Butter can be used along with mayonnaise, honey, or cream cheese but generally the others are used separately.
- Sometimes lettuce, tomato, and pickles are put between the spread and the main ingredient. Popular main ingredients include tuna, salmon, peanut butter, cheese, cooked egg, chicken, ham, turkey, or other meats. Often people will use leftovers (maybe pork or beef) in sandwiches. With sandwiches you have to be careful that the meat or mayonnaise does not spoil between the time you make it and the time you actually eat it. Talk to your host family about this! There are some foods that are unsafe to eat if they are not kept cool.

Once you become familiar and comfortable with these foods, you will find breakfast and lunch easy to prepare. Take the time to eat a good breakfast and plan a healthy lunch. Do not fall into the trap of skipping breakfast and having junk food only for lunch. This will cause you to lose concentration in your academic work and will also cause you to gain weight. You need a lot of energy to do your best in school.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES Ask your host family how to use all kitchen appliances. Some kitchen appliances or utensils can be dangerous, especially if they are new to you. Some homes have garbage disposals underneath the sink – do NOT put your hand down the drain. Hot pots should only be handled with oven mitts and should not be set on the counter right after being on the stove.

EATING OUT Eating out can be an adventure, as there is a wide variety of food choices in

America: fast food, family restaurants, coffee shops, cafeterias, and elegant restaurants. These vary in price and even in the amount of time you are expected to take for a meal.

Tips When Eating at a Restaurant:

- Read the menu carefully for food options and what comes with each meal.
- When you are ready to leave, you can signal the server with a smile and a raised hand to bring you the check (or bill) to pay for the meal. You should ask, “Excuse me, can I have the check, please.”
- The bill will include the cost of all food, drinks, and sales tax. It is common to also leave an additional 15%-20% for gratuity (or tip) for your server. However, if dining in a large group, often the gratuity will already be included in the bill, so there is no need to leave an additional tip. Check your bill carefully. If dining at a fast food restaurant (e.g. McDonalds), tips are not necessary.
- If you have not completed your meal, you can ask for a take-home box or bag, often called a “to-go box,” to take your leftovers home.

FURTHER FOOD NOTES

- You will find many Americans eat a lot of meat.
- The potato is probably America’s most common food. It will appear in many different forms. In restaurants you will generally be asked to choose your favorite type. You will certainly have baked potato, mashed potatoes, french fries, and potato chips in your new home and perhaps other types of potato food dishes.
- Eggs are also quite versatile, and again in restaurants you may be asked to pick your favorite type. They come scrambled, poached, fried, hard-boiled, soft-boiled, and omelets. In addition, fried eggs can come many ways, either “sunny-side up” which means fried only on one side, or “over-easy” which means fried on both sides. You should experiment with all of them!
- A BLT is a sandwich made of bacon, lettuce, and tomato.
- A club sandwich has three layers, generally with a variety of items, including bacon, lettuce, tomato, turkey or chicken.
- A doughnut (donut) is a sweet, round piece of fried dough, generally with a hole in the middle. It is often coated in something sweet, like chocolate, butterscotch, or a glaze.
- A bagel is also rounded dough, generally with a hole in the middle, but it is not particularly sweet, tasting more like bread.
- You will encounter a variety of salads with an equally wide array of salad dressings to put over them. Generally, people like Ranch, Italian, French, and Caesar dressings.

YOUR HOST FAMILY ASSIGNMENT

In assigning you to a host family, CVCS considers all relevant factors. You may not change your host family assignment unless it is an extreme situation. Any concerns of the student or family should be shared with the LC, CC or Intl. Director. Host family assignments are for one year at a time. You and your parents are welcome to share your preferences in advance for host family assignments for subsequent years, but such preferences are not guaranteed.

You are expected to become an integral part of your host family. You will be asked to assume duties and responsibilities in your host family's household. Such duties and responsibilities may include but are not limited to: household chores, cooking, washing dishes, laundry, and cleaning. **You should help as much as you can. For example, when the groceries are brought from the supermarket, assist in taking them inside the house and putting them away. It is also nice to volunteer for something that needs to be done.**

You must follow the host family's rules and customs regarding curfew, household chores, and internet use. You are expected to participate in family activities including attending religious services.

Your host family will expect you to act like an adult, so be responsible and respectful. Be considerate to your host family. If you are going to be late for dinner, notify them in advance—at least an hour beforehand and preferably even earlier. If you are going out, ask permission in advance (at least 48 hours) and let them know where you are when you are likely to be back. If you are going to be late, call or text your host family and let them know—they will be worried. Although your host family will generally treat you like an adult, your host parents are responsible for you and will ask you to work on areas of your life that need improvement.

Treat children in your host family respectfully and kindly. You may find it valuable to read to younger children as a way of practicing your English. At the same time, do not be afraid to tell the children to leave your room. Close the door, saying, "I have to study" or "I need some rest." If a child is bothering you, it is reasonable to mention that politely to your host parents. Older children in the family will have their own lives to lead. They may not invite you into their circle. If this is the case, you should respect their privacy. Take note of any special events in the host family, such as birthdays or holidays, and celebrate with them! Your host family will enjoy hearing about your own family back home. They will be delighted if you cook a meal for them occasionally to introduce them to your own culture. Soon you will come to feel like part of your host family. It will take time. It helps, however, if you make a decision to integrate fully into the family's routines, rather than keeping to yourself in your own room.

10. HOST FAMILY GUIDELINES

Your host family will develop their own family guidelines and will give a copy of these guidelines to you and the LC or CC upon your arrival. Your family guidelines will explain how things work in your home. Examples of items that are covered in the host family guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Dinner time, bedtime, quiet time, and study-time
- How laundry is handled (many international students will not be familiar with how to use washing machines or dryers)
- Curfew hours
- How to clean the kitchen or dining area after you cook
- Dress code outside of your bedroom
- How to run a dishwasher and other appliances
- What to do in an emergency in the home
- The family's table manners, including who sets the table

EMERGENCIES

Learn what to do in case of an emergency: fire, earthquake, etc. Most families should have a place to meet if there is a natural disaster. This allows everyone to be accounted for.

Familiarize yourself with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the house.

Keep important phone numbers with you. This includes the home, cell and work numbers of your host family, along with the address of their house. When you leave the house, always have your working, charged cell phone with you. Familiarize yourself with the transportation routes around your house so that you do not get lost. If a stranger approaches you, remember, you do not need to talk to them. If you feel you are in danger, leave immediately, head to a place where there are other people, and call your host family.

RECYCLING AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

Americans place a lot of emphasis on recycling and energy conservation. It is important to join your host family and school in their recycling efforts.

In some cities, families separate plastics, cardboard, glass, aluminum, paper, newspapers, and even milk cartons from their garbage and put these into a recycling bin. The city will then pick up the trash and recycling for the neighborhood.

The idea of recycling often includes food. It is considered a good thing to eat leftovers from a meal. For example, if you pour yourself a drink or open a bag of chips, you should try to finish it at some point and not waste any food. Do not take more than you can consume at one time. If you are unable or unwilling to finish what you have taken, put it in an appropriate place so it can

be finished later.

If you are the last one to leave a room, always turn off the lights. Close windows to conserve energy, particularly during colder times of the year. Do not open windows if screens have been removed. This would invite animals into the house, especially in winter. In winter you may need to wear warmer clothes, including sweaters, to be more comfortable.

HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

You may be familiar with most of the machines in your new home, but a few may seem strange. If you are unsure, get instructions from your host family.

Clothes dryers are common in America for doing laundry. Washing machines should not be overloaded as they will not work properly. Dishwashers are also very common. Watch and learn how the host family uses and operates each of these household appliances.

Power outlets and voltage may also be different. In most of North America, it is 110-115 volts, 60 cycles AC. You may need an adaptor to operate equipment that you've brought from your home country.

11. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Computers and Internet access are available in classrooms, library, and the Eagles Nest. Although the Internet represents a valuable information resource for legitimate school business and research and information sharing, it also presents a significant opportunity for abuse. It is the school's policy that Internet use should be strictly limited to school activities or assignments.

APPROPRIATE COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

1. Consulting with experts in a variety of fields.
2. Communicating with other individuals regarding a particular area of study or work-related situation.
3. Conducting searches, evaluating resources, and locating relevant material.
4. Interacting with up-to-date primary sources.
5. Using educational software, and websites as told by instructor. Students are held responsible for their actions whenever using the school's computers and/or Internet.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES THAT WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION, WHICH COULD LEAD TO EXPULSION.

IMPROPER COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE:

1. Using the network for any unlawful activities, including sending or receiving copyrighted materials in violation of copyright laws or license agreements
2. Using the network for financial gain or initiating any financial transactions
3. Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance. Any security problems must be reported to the technology coordinator and not shared with other users.
4. Vandalizing the data of another user
5. Wastefully using finite resources. Internet traffic affects the school's network computer infrastructure by using network bandwidth, storage and computer resources. Conserve these resources and protect system response time.
6. Gaining unauthorized access to resources, including attempting to bypass the censor ware installed on a computer with Internet access
7. The intentional access or disclosure of proprietary or confidential school data by anyone without legitimate business purpose and right to know is prohibited.
8. Invading the privacy of individuals including reading email that belongs to others without their permission
9. Using an account owned by another user, with or without that user's permission
10. Passwords and other computer security procedures are confidential and may not be disclosed to anyone without first obtaining permission from the pertinent administrator.
11. Posting personal communications without the author's consent or posting information not meant to be made public
12. Posting rude or inappropriate messages
13. Sending or retrieving sexually explicit or offensive images, messages, cartoons or jokes, ethnic slurs, racial epithets or any other statement or image that might be construed as harassment, disparagement or libel
14. Downloading malware, including viruses, spyware, adware, or any damaging software or code viruses, or attempting to circumvent security programs
15. Students are never permitted to use a teacher's computer.
16. Violating the spirit of the school's Mission Statement It is to be understood that Internet access is a privilege, not a right, and a student's access may be terminated.

All students agree to abide by the following Code of Ethics with regard to their electronic communication.

I will strive to act in all situations with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights of others and to help others to behave in a similar fashion. I will make a conscious effort to be a good testimony to students, faculty members, and others I communicate with on the Internet. I agree to follow the school's basic rules on conduct, and I will strive to apply Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things." Students use the Internet at their own risk.

CVCS is not responsible for:

1. The reliability of the content of a source received by a user. Students must appropriately evaluate sources.
2. Any consequences of disruption in service that may result in lack of resources. Though every effort is made to insure a reliable connection, there may be times when the Internet service is down or scheduled for use by teachers, classes, or students.
3. Guarantee of privacy or security of electronic mail. All e-mail messages are the property of the school. The administration reserves the right to investigate and monitor any e-mail, images, or documentation that comes through CVCS School computers. The computers and peripheral equipment, including printers, software, and e-mail, are the property of CVCS. Students are prohibited from moving the computers and peripheral equipment within the school and/or removing them from the school property. In addition, under no circumstances are students to install or remove software or hardware on individual computers or the network. The only persons authorized to install or remove hardware and software are the Technology Managers.

12. COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

Your LC or CC will meet with you and your host family at least once a month to assess your homestay situation. Your host family will be filling out a monthly report and submitting it to the agency and Intl Director, that will include information about your overall health and well-being, how you are adjusting to life at school, and how you are interacting with your host family. Any questions or concerns will be addressed as necessary. Your host family will also communicate with your parents once a month with pictures and news about school and home life. Any academic concerns will be addressed by the international office at the end of each grading period. If parents need to be contacted, the Director of the International Program will contact guardians and/or parents.

You are expected to Skype/FaceTime or call your parents in your home country at least weekly. Initially you may want to communicate with your parents more often; however, after several weeks, you should not need to communicate with them every day. Communication with your

home family should be coordinated with your host family's schedule and must occur prior to curfew in a manner that does not interrupt your host family's plan.

13. FINANCES

You should have sufficient financial support to ensure your well-being during the entire program. You should have a credit, ATM, VISA card (that is capable of withdrawing cash from an ATM in the United States) in your name with at least a \$1,000 credit limit to cover expenses throughout the year.

Typically, your host family will pay for routine expenses such as food, snacks, basic toiletries, and local transportation. However, you are responsible for any other expenses such as your cell phone bill, shopping, student social events, expensive toiletries, special foods, physical exams/vaccinations, eye exams, calculators, special snacks, personal entertainment such as movies and sports events, travel, clothing, and other optional purchases.

Lunches are covered by the host family as they will provide options for you to pack a lunch at home. Any expenses for lunches purchased at school that are beyond what your host family has agreed to provide are your responsibility.

Do not keep money around the house, and do not carry a lot of cash with you. If possible, open a bank account to ensure your money is safe. Your host family will help you do this. Be careful with American bills; they are all the same size and color, it is easy to get them confused. Coins are legal tender in the U.S. and can be used to purchase items.

You are not permitted to loan or borrow money from your host family or other students. You should never allow someone else to use your credit card. If you are having trouble with money, it is best to talk to the International Program Director about your situation.

14. ELECTRONICS

You may use your electronic devices and the internet at your home for entertainment purposes for up to 2 hours per night on school nights. You may be allowed more than 2 hours on non-school nights. This includes the time you may communicate with friends and family in your home country. Your host parents may limit computer, internet, and cell phone usage if they feel it is interfering with your academic progress or hindering your social connection with your host family.

You are required to have a charged, working cell phone that can be reached by dialing a US domestic phone number. You are responsible for adding minutes to your phone each month in order to assure continuous service. You are also responsible for keeping your phone charged and turned on whenever you are not at home so that your host family can reach you. Host families are required to have wireless internet and printer available with a filter system and

spyware in their home. The language settings of all your electronic devices **MUST** be in English.

You are strictly prohibited from intentionally viewing a website with pornography, extreme violence, profanity, and/or any other inappropriate content. Depending on the severity of any misconduct, you may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion from CVCS.

15. TRANSPORTATION

In some areas it may not be safe to walk, especially at night. It is best to talk to your host family about this; they will let you know what areas are safe. They may also set a curfew, which is a time when you must be home, depending on your age. If you intend to ride a bike, you should familiarize yourself with traffic laws and signals. It is mandatory that you wear a helmet on a bicycle. At night you will need a light on your bike.

While enrolled in CVCS, you may acquire a driver's license in the United States if you are 18 years old and/or a senior in grade 12. Please see CVCS driving policy. Most International students will rely on your host family for transportation. They will provide you with rides to and from school and will arrange or provide transportation to and from church and extracurricular activities such as sports, band activities, retreats, and other school functions. You should discuss ride needs with your host family well in advance (the sooner, the better), and their flexibility in providing rides will be in the context of their overall family needs, including other CVCS students. **Under no circumstances are you allowed to hitchhike, solicit a ride from a stranger, or use Uber or similar services.** Taxis may only be used in rare circumstances with host parent permission. You are not allowed to accept a ride not approved by your host family in advance. Use of Uber or other ride apps are to be approved by your agency prior to use.

16. SCHOOL/ACADEMIC SUPPORT

You will attend school regularly, will be enrolled as a full-time student, and may be required to participate in study times. You must make a concerted effort to make satisfactory academic progress (A or B grades) and must be involved in some co-curricular activities. If you are achieving a C average or lower, CVCS personnel and your host family may require additional study hours and limit your co-curricular and weekend activities until your grades are improved. Your grades will be reviewed regularly. Academic support will be provided by CVCS, if needed. Private tutoring will be the responsibility of each student.

Classrooms in America tend to be more informal than what you are used to. You will be expected to express your opinions at the invitation of the teacher. If you do not understand something, ask your teacher. You can do this during class, just before, or after class. You may also meet with your teacher during his/her office hours, at lunch, or after school. If you don't ask questions, your teacher will assume you understand everything.

Teachers do not expect to negotiate grades with students. If you have a concern or problem with a grade, it is fair to bring it up. However, this should not be done regularly.

17. ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

You are not automatically eligible for an athletic program offered at CVCS. If you are interested in joining an athletic program at CVCS, you must check the eligibility requirements of the program you are interested in joining. Eligibility is determined on an individual basis by the state's high school association governing body. The athletic clearance packet must also be completed before joining any sport team.

18. LEARNING ENGLISH/ENGLISH ONLY

You must make a concerted effort to improve your English proficiency. To help accomplish this, you are strongly encouraged to interact with your peers by speaking English, and you should refrain from spending too much time with other students speaking in your native language. You will be expected to abide by the “**English Only**” rule at school and in your host family home. The only exception to this rule is when you are communicating with your family and/or friends in your home country. You may not speak your native language when others who do not speak your language are present. Improving your proficiency in English will help you perform better in school and facilitate your adjustment to life in the United States.

19. SHOPPING

Shopping may be confusing because there are so many stores that sell similar things. It is helpful to talk with your host family to find out where the best bargains and best quality can be found. It is not common to bargain in stores. The price of the good is considered “fixed” or set. However, taxes will be added by the cash register. The taxes vary by location and sometimes by the type of goods. You should treat the clerks as equals. However, it is perfectly fine to tell them if you are not interested in purchasing the item.

20. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Here are some things to be aware of when you are in a public place around a lot of other people:

- Make sure your voice is not too loud.
- Keep to the right side of the road or sidewalk when walking, going upstairs, or on escalators.
- Wait in line if you are in a place where there are a lot of people; do not push ahead of anyone.
- Try not to block the view of other people if you are at a sporting event, movie, concert, or somewhere where people are trying to watch something.

For parties or social events, you are not typically expected to arrive right on time. However, you typically do not want to be more than 15 minutes to 30 minutes late. If you will be more than an

hour late, you should inform the host of the event. At parties, people often wander around meeting other people. Sometimes people pass food around. The idea of equality is true for parties too. Everyone serves each other, and men and women will take on this task the same way. A “potluck” party is a time when everyone brings a food dish to be shared with the others. Sometimes you will be asked in advance what you are bringing, but often everybody brings whatever they want.

21. DATING

While we understand that students will pursue deep friendships with each other, one-on-one dating is not permitted. When attending school events or weekend activities, students must always be in groups of 3 or more. Student must abstain from all sexual activity. Serious romantic involvement is not permitted. You may not take any action that may change the nature of your life (for example, become engaged or marriage). Physical contact is limited to hand holding only.

If you experience any unwelcome sexual conduct by another person, whether physically or verbally, you must immediately report the incident to your host parent(s) or a CVCS official. Likewise, you must notify your host parent(s) or a CVCS official if you experience harassment of any kind that is offensive or threatening to you and based on your race, gender, national origin, religion, and/or disability. If harassment is found to have occurred CVCS will take appropriate corrective action.

22. WEEK-ENDS/RELIGIOUS SERVICES

CVCS is a Christian school, and Biblical beliefs are integrated in every course and school activity. Our Bible curriculum is specifically written to provide a safe learning place for nonbelievers while simultaneously challenging our Christian students. We provide experiences to develop believers according to their individual journeys. We think of evangelism and discipleship in terms of a harvest field with each student having different soil that needs to be considered as we plant and water seeds. We also seek to be bridge builders, not barrier builders, looking for peaceful, harmonious ways to share the gospel. You are encouraged to attend church with your host family at least 2 times per month. If Sunday is a regular part of the family practice, you should attend with them. Evening youth group meetings and events are encouraged but not required.

SLEEPOVERS AND SHORT TRIPS

International students often get invitations to church retreats or to sleepovers with an American friend’s family. At least 24 hours ahead of the proposed sleepover or retreat, **you must have written permission via email from your parents and your host parents for any sleepover with a family or church retreat that is not a host family approved by CVCS staff.** In

addition, you and your host family must also communicate these plans and forward the permission email to the International Program Director.

You may not travel to other schools to visit friends or take short trips, including going to Los Angeles, etc. without the supervision your host family or an approved adult (25 years or older). These arrangements must be always approved one week ahead of the intended travel.

23. FAMILY VISITS

We encourage your family to visit while you at CVCS. If you notify us at least two weeks in advance of a visit, CVCS will coordinate plans for the visit, including a dinner meeting with your host family as well as a time for your family to meet your teachers at CVCS. Your family is not permitted to stay in your host family home. You may stay with your family at a nearby hotel during their visit.

24. HEALTH MEDICAL

Student Medical Insurance is required to be on file prior to starting the school year. Costs not covered by your insurance will be the responsibility of you and your parents. You must share with your host family and the school nurse any medication you bring from your home country to take on a regular or occasional basis.

Wellness and Counseling

The need for counseling support may be identified by the student, the CVCS Director of International Students, the LC or CC or host family. The goal of counseling will be to work with your child and CVCS to find solutions to any problem that might interfere with your child's success. As trust is crucial in the counseling relationship, CVCS will make every effort to protect a student's privacy. To promote candor, CVCS asks that parents respect the privacy of students who may not wish to share certain information about their counseling.

Accident or Illness

- Your host family will provide initial care for you and seek medical attention if needed.
- You must bring your insurance card with you and the signed Medical Authorization & Treatment Form and present them to the hospital or physician to obtain treatment. Your host family will assure that this is done.
- Contact the International Program Director and LC or CC as soon as possible.
- Follow the doctor's advice for emergency treatment.
- Your designated guardian will contact and relay advice from your parents.

First Aid

First Aid is available during school hours if you become ill or are injured. If it is a life-threatening or urgent situation, your host family will take you to the ER or Urgent Care.

Insurance

You will be required to carry medical insurance during the period of your enrollment in CVCS. You should carry your insurance identification card with you at all times. Your host family is not responsible for your medical expenses. Your parents are responsible for all medical costs that you incur.

25. DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

You are not allowed to participate in any dangerous recreational activities from which a risk of serious physical injury can be reasonably discerned. Examples of such dangerous activities include, but are not limited to, snowboarding, ski jumping, hang gliding, zip lining, bungee jumping, use of firearms at a shooting range, and skydiving. If you participate in a forbidden activity, your parents (not your host family) must accept full responsibility for any consequences resulting from your participation in the activity.

You may participate with your host family in more common types of recreational activity only if your parents give your host family written consent and release liability of CVCS and your host family in writing. Such recreational activity includes hiking, cross country or downhill skiing, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking.

26. SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

You must comply with all laws of the United States including state laws and municipal ordinances as a condition of your student visa. Under no circumstances may you use, purchase, or possess any tobacco products, drugs, or alcohol. See details in the CVCS Student Handbook.

You may not use, possess, purchase, or own any type of fireworks or weapons, including but not limited to a knife, brass knuckles, slingshots, bow and arrows, throwing stars, switchblades, explosives, or a firearm. A firearm includes any device that can shoot a bullet, pellet, flare, tranquilizer, spear dart, or other projectile, whether loaded or unloaded. This also includes air guns, dart guns, pellet guns, BB guns, pistols, revolvers, rifles, and plastic firearms made with 3-D printers and copying technology, as well as any ammunition for any such device. You may use a regular cooking knife to help prepare meals with prior approval of your host parents.

27. SCHOOL BREAKS AND TRAVEL

If you are a new student, we suggest that you travel home for Christmas break because of the high value we put on the relationship between you and your home family. Even a 10-day to 2-week break is very helpful to your cultural, emotional and psychological adjustment and is highly recommended by CVCS. Travel arrangements for all Christmas break plans are the financial responsibility of you and your family and must be finalized by Sept. 30 of the school year. **You must submit your travel itinerary to the international office. Travel must be completed in order to start classes on time.**

Students in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year at CVCS are strongly encouraged to return home during the 2-week Christmas break but may also choose to visit a relative in the United States with parent permission, at parent expense, and with prior approval from the Agent and Director of International Students. Your parents must submit a completed Permission Form stating that they take full responsibility for the logistics and care of you while visiting the relative or close family friend in the US. You must acknowledge in writing that you are required to behave in compliance with these Guidelines and CVCS Student Handbook while staying with a relative or close family friend. Staying with a relative or close family member does not relieve your obligation to abide by all restrictions imposed by your student visa. If you are found to have violated these Guidelines or CVCS Student Handbook while staying with a relative or close family friend you may be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. All costs associated with your stay in the United States during break are your responsibility.

Your parents are responsible for booking and purchasing all flight tickets to, from, and within the United States for you. Once flight tickets to the United States have been purchased, you or your parents must forward a copy of the itinerary to the Director of International Students immediately. You may not arrive prior to the date specified in your enrollment contract without prior permission from the Director of Intl Students. Your parents must notify the Director as soon as they become aware of any changes that need to be made to your flight schedule. Any changes of arrival or departure dates must be approved by the Director in advance unless such changes are due to circumstances beyond your control. If you arrive or depart earlier or later than the specified dates without prior approval of the International Program Director, you may be subject to unexcused absences and the consequences. Travel dates for each school year will be published by the school and are in the school calendar and on the website.

You are also encouraged to travel during spring break. You are allowed to travel to your home country for spring break, or you can choose to attend one of multiple spring break trips. You are responsible for the cost of travel.

You must submit your travel itinerary to the international office. Travel must be completed in order for you to start classes on time.

You are permitted to travel with your host family or CVCS personnel within the United States with prior approval of the Director of International Students.

Aside from trips directly to and from your home country, you may not travel internationally or domestically alone unless prior approval is granted from the International Program Director. Prior approval will require you have an adult age 25 or older responsible for you during your travel. If independent travel is permitted, the cost of this independent travel would be your responsibility.

You should not book or purchase flight tickets between your home country and the United States for the following school year until re-enrollment contracts have been executed. In May of a given school year, the I-20 may be extended for another academic year provided you have done well academically and are current on school payment.

You are required to go home every summer to reconnect with your family. This travel is the financial responsibility of you and your family. You are also required to submit your travel itinerary and return on the mandatory return date.

28. OTHER Visa/Passport

You must comply with all restrictions imposed on your student visa. Your visa and/or passport must be valid for the entire school year.

Under the terms and conditions of your student visa, you may not be employed while enrolled in CVCS except for certain on-campus work. If you are found to have engaged in unauthorized employment, you may be subject to return to your home country for violating the terms and conditions of your visa.

Termination

Although CVCS hopes your enrollment will be mutually rewarding, CVCS has the right to dismiss you or require your withdrawal when, in the exercise of CVCS professional judgment, it deems it appropriate to do so as a result of conduct on your part which is contrary to the school's policies/instructions or to these Guidelines for International students; conduct which is unsafe to self or others; academic performance which is inconsistent with the standards expected at CVCS; or other acts or behavior the school deems unacceptable. In this case, all fees paid will be nonrefundable and your I-20 will be cancelled.

Miscellaneous

If you need unusual help for a matter not related to the academic requirements of CVCS, your family must request permission for the activity and provide necessary funds and compensation for the activity (specialized athletic participation, orthodontic work, etc.).

You are prohibited from engaging in conduct that may change your legal status or significantly alter your physical appearance while enrolled in CVCS. Such conduct includes but is not limited to getting married, becoming pregnant, causing a pregnancy, cosmetic surgery, or dying your hair an unnatural color (such as green, purple, or pink).

Your parents have given CVCS and partner organizations the right to use your photograph for reproduction in any medium for the purposes of publication, advertising, display, or editorial use. No personal information will be publicized.

Questions

We hope these Guidelines for Homestay Boarding Students will help you to understand what is expected of you as a student at CVCS. Understand that no set of written guidelines can anticipate every situation that may occur and that CVCS reserves the right to take such actions as it deems necessary regarding the matter that arises while you are a student with us. Should you have any questions about these Guidelines or any other matter while a student at CVCS, you can speak with the International Program Director.

APPENDIX 1 – CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

From the day you arrive until the day you leave, you will encounter differences between Western culture and your own. Many of the major differences are linked to the following:

The Role of Women In the last 30 years, the role of women has changed in North America. Women have assumed more of an equal role in society. Their work and family partners listen to them and make major more of an equal role in society. Women are often found in leadership roles in businesses and organizations.

Although some of the traditional distinctions linger – men are still much less likely than women to do housework, for example – you will likely be surprised by the equality. This has changed family life dramatically. It is common for mothers to work outside the home and for fathers to spend time with their children after work. It is also common for parents to show affection for each other by holding hands, hugging, and kissing. In many American families both the mother and father work outside the home. As a result, your host family may ask you to do more household tasks than you are used to.

Individualism North America is highly individualized. Groups are important—families,

businesses, sports teams, and student clubs – but people think and act in their own best interests. North Americans are trained from a young age to be independent and to think critically. You will see this in the classroom, where students are expected to ask questions and have individual opinions. You will encounter this in the home, where parents offer choices to small children and may ask you for your opinion or input on issues more often than you are used to.

Informality Americans are informal people most of the time. There are few formal greetings.

Space Americans react to space differently because they have a lot of it. They are more likely to live in houses, often on large lots. In general, boundaries are broader because people do not like to be close to one another. Overall, Americans are not used to being close up, face to face.

Privacy With all that space, Americans seek private moments. They assume other people will also want time alone. Bedrooms are often a place to get away and be alone. If someone is in their bedroom and you need them, knock on the door and wait for a response.

Busyness Family members are very busy. So it is very important to let others know when your schedules/needs change. American parents do not like surprises and will be more likely to accommodate your requests if you give them adequate notice, so plan ahead.

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

In America, we celebrate many holidays, including:

- **New Year's Day – January 1st** The start of the New Year is generally celebrated the evening before (New Year's Eve), with parties. On New Year's Eve (December 31st), it is common to celebrate the New Year by staying up late and counting down the clock until midnight. Some people like to hold open houses on the day itself.
- **Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday** – This is celebrated on the third Monday in January. This holiday honors Martin Luther King Jr., the man who led the struggle for equality and civil rights on behalf of African-Americans in the 1960s.
- **Valentine's Day** – This is celebrated on February 14. It is a day when people exchange cards, gifts, and candy with the people they are fond of.
- **President's Day** – This is celebrated on the 3rd Monday in February and honors presidents of the United States.
- **Good Friday/Easter** – This religious holiday celebrates Jesus Christ's death on the cross to save the world from sin and his resurrection from the dead. Easter Sunday occurs in March or April.
- **Memorial Day** – This holiday, celebrated on the last Monday in May, honors the soldiers who died in all American Wars.

- **Independence Day** – America declared its independence on this day, July 4th, and it is celebrated with parades, picnics, and fireworks.
- **Labor Day** – On the first Monday in September, this holiday honors workers in the United States.
- **Halloween – October 31st** Children dress up in costumes and go door to door collecting candy from neighbors. This practice is called “trick-or-treating.”
- **Thanksgiving** – This celebration of the harvest occurs in late November (typically the last Thursday of the month). Families gather and have a festive meal, usually with turkey and pumpkin pie. This is a good time to share what you are thankful for with friends and family.
- **Christmas – December 25th** This holiday marks the birth of Christ and is a time for family gatherings and gift-giving.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Some common misconceptions (things that are not true) include:

- **Misconception #1:** In the U.S., everyone is glamorous and rich – just like in the Hollywood movies. This is true: You will probably be living an ordinary life with a family that is neither rich nor poor. They probably, for example, won’t have a maid to look after your needs.
- **Misconception #2:** American families are all white and headed by a mother and father. This is true: America is quite multicultural (from many ethnic backgrounds), and the nature of families is varied.
- **Misconception #3:** Your host family will dote on you, with the mother devoting much of her day to making your life easier. This is true: family members will cherish their time with you, but they have their own lives to lead.
- **Misconception #4:** Your host family house will be like a hotel. This is true: you may have your own room, but most likely you will be sharing all of the other facilities.
- **Misconception #5:** Meals will be like in a restaurant; you will have a large breakfast with convenient choices, several options for lunch, and a full course dinner with soup and dessert. This is true: meals tend to be hurried and informal.
- **Misconception #6:** You will be the only international student in the household. This is true: sometimes more than one student will be living with your host family. In some cases, they will be from another country. That can be an advantage, since it gives you somebody to share your experiences with.
- **Misconception #7:** You will be able to speak English like a native after a short time in your host family. This is true: English is a very complex language and speaking it well takes considerable time. However, you will improve your English dramatically by staying with an English-speaking family.

APPENDIX 2—DEALING WITH CULTURAL SHOCK

All of the change associated from living in a new country – from food to conversational patterns –will likely result in what is called “culture shock.” This is a common and natural time of disorientation and anxiety as your two cultures come together. This is common with travelers who move from one culture to another.

In fact, culture shock is part of a broader cycle of adaptation. It is worth looking in detail at that cycle, since it helps if you are prepared for the various stages and understand what is happening to you. It also helps to understand that you are not alone as almost EVERYBODY goes through the same process. You cannot prevent these stages from occurring, but you can reduce their impact.

STAGE 1: ARRIVAL

First, it is important to pace yourself by taking naps, getting rest, and preparing yourself for short bursts of homesickness. Some students may have short-term health problems that include diarrhea or constipation; acne or pimples; and abnormal menstrual cycles for girls. For the most part, though, this beginning period is wonderful, because everything is new, interesting, and rewarding.

As you settle in, however, the differences may start to become annoying. Although this may be fun, everything is different. Things smell different, the water tastes different, and people dress differently. Your support system from home is away, and you are struggling with a new language. It is difficult to express yourself clearly.

STAGE 2: CULTURE SHOCK

This is the time when the cultural differences really sink in, and you see your own culture differently. Some students become obsessed with cleanliness or their health. Trouble sleeping can also occur when you are tempted to stay up late, and you may oversleep. It is quite common to be very tired. Some students may find themselves overeating or not eating enough. Also, when you are tired, your English skills will probably drop, just when you were expecting them to soar. You may want to run or hide. You will probably question the purpose or worth of the trip. How will you learn English?

Culture shock often occurs about one month into your stay and can last up to three months. It is important to recognize that it is not your fault. This happens to almost everyone. In some Host Family Survival Books, authors compare culture shock to motion sickness. You would not blame yourself for getting motion sickness on the flight to America. So do not blame yourself for getting culture shock on the way to a new culture.

Since you are missing your own culture, it is common to criticize the new culture and the new people. In general, this is a bad idea. It is best to not judge a new culture and to simply accept the differences.

How to Combat Culture Shock

Some things you can do to ease your adjustment:

- Remind yourself this is happening to others and homesickness is not permanent.
- Remember that this is not your fault. It results from being in an unfamiliar environment.
- You may feel others are learning English more easily. In fact, they probably are not. It is just as difficult for them. And remember, everyone going through homestay feels these uncertainties. In the end, you will all learn English.
- Try to be very flexible and open-minded.
- Remember that you do not have to renounce your own culture to experience another one.
- Reconnect with your culture. A meal from your home country can soothe your spirits. Write a letter or call home, but don't get carried away and call continually. This will only slow your adjustment.
- Make friends with other host family students and talk about these problems. Do not feel you have to be ashamed or hide what is happening. This is not a private matter. Everyone else is going through the same culture shock. It helps to talk and comfort each other.
- Talk to your host family and the International Program Director. They have probably seen it before and can help reassure you that better times will come.
- When everything seems overwhelming, take timeout periods. Postpone communication and learning for a short time. Do something you enjoy. Take long walks or get some exercise. Listen to music. Eat well.
- Budget your money well during this period. Treat yourself, but don't spend money carelessly seeking comfort so that you run out of funds.

STAGE 3: ADJUSTMENT PHASE

In time, without noticing it, you will finally settle in. You have learned new social skills to adapt. The culture clash will diminish. Homestay will become fully enjoyable. You will fit in.

STAGE 4: HOLIDAYS

Everything should go smoothly until you are preparing to go home. Holidays can bring on a longing for family and friends. They can remind you of your outsider role in America and the distance from your own culture. You may experience culture shock. That can erupt with any holiday that reminds you that you're not at home and this is a substitute family. The Christmas holidays are the likeliest source, when school closes and everything is focused on family. You may find yourself traveling with your host family to visit their relatives or receiving guests in their home. Everybody is overjoyed at seeing each other, yet you hardly know them. You don't share much history with them. You may feel left out.

Again, try to be flexible. Join in and share their holiday. Perhaps you can take time to explain your own holidays and help them to share in your culture. This may be a time to cook a holiday meal from your home country. Communicate with them how you are feeling, even if it is homesickness or sadness.

STAGE 5: PRE-DEPARTURE

The next problem period will come before departure, as you may again have mixed feelings. You will be sad at having to leave, yet delighted to be returning home. Do not avoid these feelings. They are natural and nothing to be ashamed of. Talk about them openly with people. Accept the feelings of loss.

It is important that you leave enough time to prepare properly for departure. You have many people to say goodbye to and must complete this task properly. Share your hopes and sense of loss with your host family.

You may want to give some people special gifts. These are best when they are personal, reflecting you and your culture. If you are used to enjoying tea and coffee with your host mother, for example, buy a set of matching cups, one for her and one for you to take back. Prepare a photo album with pictures of some special events you shared. Write a letter or a

poem that you can give to the family before you leave or that you can leave behind for them to discover later.

Above all, plan your farewell. Do not just let it happen.

STAGE 6: RETURN AND RE-ADJUSTMENT

The return home can be the toughest stage, next to the initial culture shock itself. You will experience the joy of returning to your native soil, but in many ways you will feel somewhat like a stranger. You have grown. SO much has happened to you. There is so much you want to tell your family and friends. However, they may not be particularly interested in listening. They want you to be the person you were before you left. They are more interested in their own lives than the changes you experienced.

You will also be mourning again, this time for the culture you briefly adopted and the friends you made. You probably can't share that with anybody back home.

Women generally find they have taken on some of the attitudes of American feminism. They experienced more freedom and less hierarchy in America. They are used to being able to dress casually for school and now have to return to old ways.

Eventually, however, you will reconcile the two cultures and the changes in yourself. You will be home, at last.

International Student Agreement

By signing this form, I certify that I understand and accept the following conditions and agree to abide by them.

Please Complete The Agreement Below:

*I _____, [INTERNATIONAL STUDENT] HERE AT CVCS
AGREE TO THE TERMS SET OUT IN THIS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK
AND I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE TERMS ABOVE.*

*I _____, [INTERNATIONAL STUDENT] WILL AGREE TO
COMPLY WITH THIS AGREEMENT AND THAT THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS ARE
BINDING ON ME AND IF I FAIL TO ABIDE THE STUDENT COULD RESULT IN
EXPULSION OF THE SCHOOL.*

_____(SIGNATURE OF STUDENT)

_____(DATE)