

# People to People Sheboygan Chapter Student Exchange

## HOST FAMILY MANUAL

### INTRODUCTION

Acting as a host to an overseas student can be a tremendously rewarding experience for a family. However, it also entails some important obligations. Here are some of the ground rules:

- (a) It is expected that the host parents are member of the Sheboygan PTP Chapter.
- (b) The host family must undertake to supervise the school and leisure hour activities of the student as if he or she were their own son or daughter.
- (c) They shall provide room and board and should include the student in all family activities.
- (d) It is desirable for the student to have his or her own room or, however it is acceptable to share a room with your child of the same age group.

### COUNSELOR

PTP will appoint a committee member who will act as a confidante to the student during their stay. The student is expected to consult the committee member on any problems that may arise. The committee member is also available to help the host families with any problems that they may encounter in hosting the student. Do not hesitate to consult

the committee member if problems of any kind arise.

### **STUDENT NOT A GUEST**

It cannot be stressed too much that the student should not be treated as a special "honored guest" by the family. The whole value of this program centers on the acceptance by both students and hosts that the student will be "one of the family", not receiving any special favors or treatment and undertaking all the normal family chores. For this reason it is desirable that the student address the host parents as "Mom" and "Dad" or some other informal title. They should never call you "Mr." or "Mrs."

### **HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

The student should most certainly make their own bed, keep their room tidy - very difficult for some - and assist with general household chores, such as setting the table or doing dishes; boys might reasonably be expected to help with lawn mowing and similar tasks. Some complaints have been received from students that they are being used as unpaid help or as constant baby sitters. Others again have found that they are not allowed to join in with the normal household chores. The problem is to strike the right balance and a guiding principle in these cases is to ask what would be expected from the host families' own children.

### **DISCIPLINE**

As soon as a student is settled in, it is advisable for the new host parents to have a detailed discussion with the student and to lay out the house rules so that the student will know what is expected of him/her. Such a discussion can save some frustrations and resentments at a later date.

The student is expected to adapt to the supervision and discipline of the host family. Remember the host family does not have to adapt to the student; rather the student must learn to adapt to the family. Any sign of reluctance or unwillingness on the student's part to accept this point of view should be brought to the attention of the committee member, who should then clarify this point with the student. It would be better that such a ruling come from a third party, such as the committee member, rather than the host parents. Problems can arise unless the student clearly understands the fact that they are expected to conform to host country conditions. At the same time, host families should be aware of the problems of adaptation and should be prepared to be flexible. The host family must make clear what they expect of the student.

### **RELIGION**

Somewhat surprisingly this seldom poses serious problems. Most students are very flexible on attitudes and usually accompany the host family to their church even where religions differ. Host families should not force an issue and if the student wishes to follow his or her own religion, every effort should be made to assist them in this respect. However, if the host family goes to church on Sunday morning, the student should not remain home in bed.

### **NO SMOKING.**

SMOKING is NOT permitted. Wisconsin law states that you must be 18 years old to buy and smoke cigarettes. If the student turns 18 while here, we will not permit them to smoke. If the student has problem with this it is suggested that they contact their

committee member and let him know that he/she does not want to be a Exchange Student.

### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

The use and/or abuse of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in the Exchange program. IF the student is of legal drinking age, and IF the host family offers the student an occasional drink in the home with meals, and IF the student wishes to accept it, then it is permissible. IF the hosts do not use liquor in their home, the Exchange student will not either. This applies to consumption on occasion within the host home ONLY. It is expected that students will refrain from drinking at parties or in any public place. If the student is caught drinking at a party, the exchange will be terminated. If the host family suspects or knows that the student is drinking, please inform the committee member.

### **DRUGS**

Students are absolutely forbidden to indulge in drug taking in any form during the Exchange, except as prescribed by a medical practitioner. Any student breaking this rule will automatically be expelled from the program and returned home at once. If host parents have reason to suspect that the student in their care is partaking of drugs, they should immediately report their suspicions to the committee member.

### **DRIVING**

All students are specifically forbidden from driving any form of motorized vehicle - this includes cars, motorcycles, tractors, motor boats or similar vehicles - while in the program. Many legal problems can arise should a student be driving and become involved in an accident. Host families are urged to enforce this rule strictly since immediate termination of the Exchange can result if it is violated.

### **ROMANCE**

The Exchange Program rules provide that a student should not become "romantically involved" with members of the opposite sex. If host parents consider that such a relationship is developing with their student and that he/she is drifting into "deep waters," they should discuss the matter immediately with the committee member. This is a difficult area since it involves human relations, but the rule is basically sound because a student who becomes romantically attached will center a lot of attention on one person to the exclusion of others, thereby neglecting one of the main functions of the program.

### **FINANCE**

The students family will provide the student with a monthly allowance to cover immediate incidentals. Generally the student will have some additional funds of their own as well as a specified emergency fund. The host family is not obliged to provide the student with spending money nor to finance clothing, travel, or other expenses (including telephone calls). If the students do not take a lunch to school, then the host family may provide them with a sack lunch.

### **MONEY PROBLEMS**

Some young people are better at handling money than others - some students are hopeless at budgeting and need some guidance if they are to live within their monthly

allowance. Under the Exchange Program rules, each student is required to establish an emergency fund which must be replenished, as required, during the year by the student's natural parents. The amount of this emergency fund will be set at US \$300 as specified by the exchange committee, and should not be expended on day-to-day items. It is there for major expenditures such as clothing, travel, tours, and the like. It has been found that some supervision of these emergency funds is desirable and the best method has been the establishment of a special bank account which requires permission from the committee member or host parent before a withdrawal can be made. This is an issue which should be discussed with the committee member at the beginning of an Exchange and a firm policy worked out. Students should be discouraged from borrowing money.

### **TRAVEL**

The host family is under no obligation to take the student away on trips, but it will add enormously to the intrinsic value of the program if they are able to do so without financial embarrassment to themselves. Where they are not able to take students away during school holidays, they should make this clear to the committee member, who will probably be able to make alternative arrangements for the student. No special permission is required where a student accompanies a host family on a trip or holiday, but the committee member must be advised. If the student makes a journey away from the host town, both the host parents and the committee member must ensure that satisfactory travel and hosting arrangements have been made. Traveling during school terms is discouraged and should only be undertaken under specific conditions which may be established from the committee member.

### **SCHOOLING**

The Exchange Program rules require attendance at a high school. Usually the host family will take care of the enrollment details and will arrange, together with the student, the optimum subject package and educational materials. The host family's role is to supervise the day-to-day attendance of the student at school and encourage them to participate fully in both the academic and extra-curricular activities of the school. Exchange students are not exempt from homework assignments and projects and are expected to make an honest effort to succeed in school work. It is important to the success of the Exchange that any problems which might arise from language difficulties be dealt with promptly. The host parents should always ensure that the student is provided with a note for the principal/teacher to excuse them from any classes which they need to miss for any reason. It is very important that the school is kept fully informed regarding the student's program of activities.

### **HOMESICKNESS**

Every student experiences homesickness to some degree and the extent of this problem will depend largely on the student's own background and personality. Host families should be appreciative of this fact and should expect the student to have some adjustment problems. Many students say that they feel there are times when they want privacy to cope with feelings of homesickness. If your student spends some time alone in his or her room, do not be alarmed - this is fairly normal. But if the student spends a lot of time alone, this could be a danger signal that all is not well. The student who is actively involved in the community will be less likely to suffer from adjustment problems

and homesickness than the non participant; therefore do all you can to encourage your student to accept the opportunities available to become involved in the community.

### **SHARED KNOWLEDGE**

One of the main purposes of the Exchange Program is the Exchange of knowledge on an international level. Your student is an ambassador for his or her country, so show an interest in that country and try and learn as much as possible about your student's home environment. In turn, you are also an ambassador for your country by imparting knowledge about the United States way of life to your student, so that he/she will be able to take back to their home country a picture of the U.S.A. that is as accurate as possible. This two-way Exchange of ideas and information can be a very stimulating and rewarding adventure in international goodwill and understanding. By acting as a host to an overseas student you are doing far more than providing bed and board for someone; you are taking the first very essential step towards world peace, by helping to break down fears and prejudices and misunderstandings which are based on ignorance.

### **CONCLUSION**

Finally, as host parents, you must accept the responsibility of being parents to your student in the same way as to your own child. The Exchange is a two-way deal and you are the adults in this deal. You should be willing to go more than half way, you should try to give an adult lead to the young person who cannot be expected to know your rules and wishes without being told. You should expect the student to conform to your rules and wishes in the same way as your own children, but to no greater extent. It is essential to establish and maintain effective two-way communications between yourselves and your student right from the beginning. The majority of problems with and for Exchange students can be resolved by effective, firm, sympathetic understanding and loving control from the host parents. You have the responsibility for success and your reward is great - you add a son or daughter to your family.