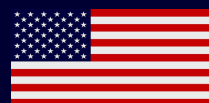


MARQUETTE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL | 2018 - 2019

HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK



BE more



306 W 10th Street Michigan City, IN 46360 marquette-hs.org

Welcome!

Dear Host Family,

We, at the Marquette Catholic High School, are pleased that you have chosen to host one of our international students. We realize, as you do, that this opportunity is more than just a program; rather, it is an experience that will be shared and cherished by your entire family, school, community, and exchange student!

Our staff is available to assist you in any way in order to experience a memorable and fulfilling time with your student. This handbook will help you and your family prepare for your student's arrival and stay.

Enclosed, you will find answers to the many questions you likely have about hosting an international student. You may be wondering what expectations Marquette has for your family while hosting a student. We have created this handbook to allow you the opportunity of familiarizing yourself with our program before your student arrives in the USA.

We wish you all the best.

James G. White
President

Suggestions to Welcome Your Student

When at your home, welcome your student! Hang a big banner or sign on the front door to make him/her feel special and welcome. Even a small welcome party is a nice idea. We do caution you not to overdo food and visitors on your student's first day. Your student just completed a long journey and may be overwhelmed easily. Do not be surprised if your student just wants to sleep!

We suggest that you give your student a few days to adjust to his/her new environment. Do not bombard your student with introductions to relatives and friends in the beginning. It is better to introduce your student to your immediate family first and then slowly begin introductions to aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, neighbors, mail carrier, etc...

Former host parents have found the suggestion of preparing a welcome kit for their student very helpful. Creating such a kit is another excellent way to make your student feel welcome and at home. Welcome Kits may include: a bilingual dictionary, airmail stationery, airmail stamps, a little telephone directory with important numbers your student may need, a map of your town, a greeting card that says, "Welcome!" and a key to your house. Use your imagination when creating your own kit!

In the days following your student's arrival, give him/her a guided tour of your house. Show him/her where things are located. You should also take time to explain how appliances work, such as the oven, toaster, microwave, television, DVD player, remote controls, and stereo system. Our students have also found that explanations regarding toilet, shower, faucets, light switch usages are also helpful. Remember - Most items in your home work differently than gadgets in other countries. What seems simple to Americans may not be simple to your international student!

Please do not panic if your student seems as though he/she can barely speak English. Your student's inability to speak English may be due to jet lag, or fear of making mistakes. It is likely that your student may be overwhelmed with the new culture. Be patient and encourage your student to speak English as much as possible. Most importantly, reassure your student that his/her ability will improve through lots of practice. If your student's English skills do not improve after the first few weeks, try placing post-it notes or index cards around your house labeling objects such as the 'TELEVISION,' 'CLOSET,' 'FRONT DOOR,' 'BEDROOM,' 'WINDOW,' or 'LAMP.' The more comfortable your student becomes with practicing English skills, the more his/her English will improve!

It will be important to discuss family rules and routines within the first week of your student's

arrival. Your household rules may differ from the rules your student had to follow in his/her home country. To prevent miscommunication, tell your student your expectations of him or her. Do not assume your student will know your family rules or routines. They will not know them unless you explain them to him or her. If all the members in the home are expected to clean their bedroom daily, please tell your student this. Do not assume your student will know these things. The same applies for your curfew on school nights and weekends. You will need to specify these things to your student. REMEMBER - You are used to your lifestyle, so it is routine for your family, and therefore, easy to forget that it is all new to your international Student.

During your student's first days you should also discuss how he/she should address you. Whatever you decide should be something with which both of you are comfortable. REMEMBER to ask your student how he/she prefers to be addressed. (Courtesy is a two-way street.)

About Your Student

Your student will come from a varied and very different background than yours. Try to learn about his/her family and lifestyle at home from his/her perspective. You will learn much about his/her culture. There are times when the student might seem offended by the things that happen in your home. Encourage open and honest communication at all times. He/She may simply be reacting to you in a way that is common in his/her culture and you can share with him/her how Americans would react to the same issue. There will be times when the student will do something that you find offensive or rude. Think about it before you react. If it is a problem, address it immediately.

Your student may wish to share his/her culture and may come from afar, thus his/her home country may be very interesting to you! He/She will also want to share the differences seen with everyone he/she has contact. It is important for you to realize that there will be many differences; some will seem positive and others will seem negative. We like to tell our students that differences are not necessarily good or bad...they are just different! Keep this in mind as you are comparing the differences with your student. Discussing differences can sometimes come across as judging. Please help your student learn the proper way to express him/herself when discussing his/her home country, culture, and customs.

Your Student and the English Language

Your student may have many reasons for participating in an exchange program. Typically, one of the chief reasons is to improve his or her English and become fluent! It is important that your student use English on a consistent basis. Television is a helpful tool to increase your

student's vocabulary. Also, please do not be afraid to correct his or her English. Tell your student that you are his or her best English teacher! Have fun watching your student's English skills improve!

Your Student and the Community

You may live in a completely different environment to which your student is accustomed. Share with your student the points of interest in your community, and what makes it unique to the area. Many of our students on the exchange program come to the USA and live in small American cities or towns. They have been prepared for the differences in areas such as transportation, community traditions, and expectations. Help your student adjust to these differences. All American communities have practices that are uncommon to foreign students, such as sporting events, farm life, drive-thru banks and fast food. Think about the areas of life that you may take for granted that will be new and interesting for your student, and engage him or her in these opportunities.

Making Friends

Your student will make friends with whom he/she may stay in touch with forever. It is not unusual for students to have trouble making friends. Encourage him/her to become involved in as many school activities as possible. If you have children of your own, please remember that they are the student's brother or sister, not a social director. In time, they will begin to act as siblings! Don't expect your children to be responsible for the student at all times. Your own children made their own friends, and your student will, too!

International students often expect to make friends the way they would in their home country. This approach may not necessarily work in the same way when they come to the USA. Assist your student in making the first contact with other teenagers in the school. Remember that the teenagers in your schools have been together for many years and they realize this student will only be visiting for the year. The teens will say hello, but may not naturally reach out to the student. Usually, the foreign student will need to take the first step. IF FRIENDSHIPS DON'T HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY...PLEASE DO NOT WORRY. Some of the best friendships develop just weeks before the student is ready to return home.

Helping Your Student Adjust to New Home, Family, and Community

Encourage your student to be open to all new experiences by joining clubs, organizations, church groups, and sports clubs, and by making friends outside of your family just like he/she has at home.

Accept that sometimes your student will miss his or her home country, a favorite song, or the smells of certain foods. Speak with your student or other host families about homesickness and

perhaps how they deal with it with their student. Holidays can be particularly difficult. Try to plan special events with your family and/or friends that will keep your student busy.

Differences You will Find with Your Student

The food you eat may be very different to what your student is accustomed. Be open and ask your student about his or her eating habits. Ask your student to share some favorite recipes from his or her home country that you can try to help prepare with your student.

Mealtimes may also be different in the USA than what your student is used to. “Self-Serve” breakfasts, “help yourself” lunches, and “on the run” dinners are common in most American families, but not in other cultures. Americans maintain an extremely high standard of personal hygiene. Do not be hesitant about requesting that your student shower daily and change his or her clothes on a daily basis.

Adjustment & Behaviors of Your Student

If you notice a pattern developing with your international student’s behavior that you consider to be inappropriate, please contact your school coordinator before the situation escalates.

Please note that during the first few weeks in the USA, international students most often undergo an adjustment period. If inappropriate behavior occurs during this time, speak with your student and explain why the behavior is unacceptable. It is possible that your student does not know this, because of the cultural differences from his or her home country. If, after you have spoken with the student, the behavior persists, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Communication With Your Student’s Home Country

The student will want to communicate with family soon after they arrive. Of course, the student should call his/her natural family as soon as possible to let them know he/she has arrived safely. Below are some guidelines to help you address the issue of communication:

We strongly recommend that your student use wifi, imessage, whatsapp, viber or facetime to communicate with family abroad.

If you have email access, PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR E-MAIL USAGE POLICY! The computer is your property and should be respected by your student. E-mail is like phone calls and should be limited. Too much contact with the student’s home will only make his/her adjustment to the USA more difficult, and possibly even lead to homesickness.

After any communication with home your student may feel lonely, even homesick. Talk about such feelings with your student. Let your student know you want to help.

Your Student and the High School

All school regulations must be followed. The student must follow all attendance requirements, dress codes, etc. You are the student's best teacher! Read the school handbook to help them with these rules.

All of the rules that pertain to American students **MUST** be followed by the foreign students. Encourage your student to make American friends...discourage them from grouping with foreign students who speak his/her language.

What You Need to Know

- Drinking of alcoholic beverages, smoking or using illegal drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Driving of automobiles, except in the case of driver's education classes, and other motorized vehicles is prohibited.
- Travel, including return to the his/her student home country, must be approved by the school. (jquinlan@marquette-hs.org)
- Visits from Natural Family are not recommended during the student's program.
- All students should maintain an overall 'C' average in classes.
- All students are not allowed to make 'life changing' alterations while participating in an International Study Program. ~ This includes, but is not limited to; marriage, pregnancy, body piercing, tattoos, religious baptisms, etc.
- Dating and or any intimate activity is not allowed.
- All students are required to follow all school rules and regulations regarding attendance, dress codes, behavior, etc.

Failure to follow Program Rules may result in probation. Should your student violate any program rule after being placed on probation, Marquette reserves the right to dismiss him/her from the International Study Program.

Your student will be given every opportunity to improve his/her student behavior. Marquette does not want your student to leave his/her student program early. Should your student choose to return home early, before his/her student program officially ends, the student and his/her parents must be of the full understanding that there are no financial refunds for any tuition and fees paid to MQTT.

More Helpful Information

Traveling

No Unauthorized or Unaccompanied Travel is Permitted While on Program

Your student does not need permission to travel with you the host family; however, please do let Meg Richardson as well as the student's natural family know when and where you will be going if you are gone for more than three days.

With permission from Marquette's principal or the Marquette Foreign Exchange Company Director, your student may travel with school. School permission must be obtained if the student will be absent from school as a result of recreational travel.

Family Visits

Natural family visits are discouraged because such visits interrupt your student's adjustment. If the student's natural family visits and wishes to travel with your student, this is also discouraged. Such travel during the program must be approved by the school, and you. Any questions regarding natural family visits or travel, please contact Meg Richardson.

Driving

Under no circumstance is your student allowed to drive. If your student drives a car he/she runs the risk of being sent home. An obtained license MUST be turned in to Marquette for the duration of your student's stay in the USA. This will be returned to your student at the end of his/her program. Driving requirements vary by state. Many states now prohibit international students from obtaining driver's licenses.

Health Insurance

Any treatment your student should require while in the US that is not covered by your student's insurance is the responsibility of the natural parents.

The Rules of Your Home

Part of the adjustment process to life in the United States is your student's understanding of your household rules. Please explain your expectations completely. The key to success is not to assume that your student understands your rules if they are not explained in detail to him or her.

Personal Chores

List chores that all family members are responsible for themselves. For example, if you would like your student to make his/her bed, clean his/her bedroom, and/or clean up after him or herself, please be sure that these are also explained.

Other Family Habits and Rules

Frequently, small things such as taking the last soda, not turning off the lights, borrowing a

tennis racket, or closing doors, can lead to misunderstandings that could be avoided. Share your concerns with each other at the onset to prevent the possibility of feelings of embarrassment or irritability.

Money Matters

Keeping track of personal spending money will be very important for your student during his/her stay. We strongly recommend that all students bring additional funds at the beginning of their program to pay for items not included in program cost. Any souvenirs or shopping should be covered by the student.

Any issues regarding money, such as household damages, unpaid telephone bills and other expenses should be reported to Marquette at the time the incident occurs and prior to the student's departure.

A Host Parent is NOT:

- Responsible for molding the exchange student's personality;
- Responsible for making certain that the exchange student is growing up to become a responsible adult;
- Responsible to change the exchange student into a "good American";
- Responsible to turn the exchange student into a "good religious follower."

A Host Parent IS:

- More like a grandparent than a parent as they are not always totally responsible for behavior of the student;
- Cautious about imposing their own experiences, wisdom, and culture, since this may not be appropriate all of the time;
- Concerned about the student's adjustment and happiness for the duration of the student's stay in the USA;
- Able to realize that the culture in which they grew up is not the same culture in which the student did;
- Available to provide a helping hand, when needed;
- Available to share life experiences, and American culture and customs.

We thank you again for your participation in this program. Should you have any questions or concerns at any time, please feel free to contact Mr. James White at 219 873 1325 or via email at jwhite@marquette-hs.org. We hope you enjoy this cultural addition to your home!