Modified Arrival Orientation:
Planning For Event Family/Host Family Pick Up Of Students at Arrival Locations

BACKGROUND
Since AFS-USA moved to a decentralized orientation structure in the 1990’s, the guidelines for AFS hosting Arrival Orientations were designed to have students overnight at a central location, receive the Arrival Orientation and meet their host families the following day. In the past 10 years, we have found that more and more teams are utilizing a wider variety of lodgings and orientation formats for students.

After the successful pilot project utilizing Event Families and direct Host Family pick ups, this policy was put into effect in the 2014 NH cycle. All Area Teams have the option to use either the “Modified” Arrival Orientation or the “Traditional” one, depending on Area Teams’ preferences, resources, time etc. The Modified Arrival orientation can be used as long as the compliance and logistical tasks listed below, as well as the content requirements outlined in the Arrival Orientation Leader Guide, are followed and met.

MODIFIED ORIENTATION POLICY
1. EVENT FAMILY/HOST FAMILY PICK UP AT ARRIVAL LOCATION Requirements:
To ensure that we are in compliance with the Department of State, Council on Standards for International Educational Travel and AFS International, if an Area Team chooses to have Event Families or Host Families pick up their student at the arrival point, the following standards MUST be followed:

- **IN ALL CASES**, a Volunteer MUST be at the arrival point to facilitate the meeting between the Host/Event Family and the student.
- The Volunteer at the airport will be the main contact for the Travel and Logistics (TLC) department. If there are delays/changes in travel, the TLC staff will contact this Volunteer with updates. Event/Host Families will NOT be the primary contact for communication regarding students.
- The Volunteer at the airport MUST verify the identity of the Host Parent(s) by checking a form of government-issued photo ID BEFORE releasing the student.
- The Volunteer at the airport MUST provide the following information to the student and Host/Event Family BEFORE the student can leave with the family.
  - **ID card**: Ensure that the student has arrived with their ID card. Bring a copy in case the student did not bring it and/or if the Liaison or Event/Host Family information changed within three weeks prior to arrival.
  - **Date, time, location of Arrival Orientation**: MUST be printed to be handed out to student and Event/Host Family (include contact numbers and reminder to bring passport to orientation - volunteers have to collect passport info at the orientation and ensure visa stamp is accurate)
  - **AFS-USA Duty Officer/emergency phone number**: MUST give Event/Host Families a printed copy of the contact information and explain how to use it.
  - **Distribute the “Host Family Cheat Sheet” and “Participant & Host Family Questionnaire”**: Both handouts are important tasks that Host Families should be working on with the student prior to the Arrival Orientation.
- **The team must provide the student with an Arrival Orientation WITHIN 7 days**, either one-on-one or in a group. Attendance must be recorded in the Global Link Activity Module.
TRAVEL VOLUNTEER

To help us facilitate tracking hundreds of arrivals with 80+ sites, each Area Team/arrival location must identify ONE Volunteer on their team to be affiliated as the “Travel and Logistics Rep”. This person may also be the Orientation Coordinator or Hosting Coordinator. This will help us in tracking who is responsible for communication for each arrival.

The Travel Rep will coordinate the pick-up of students at the airport. While the Travel Rep does not have to be at the airport for every single arrival, they will be the main point of contact for the Regional Travel and Logistics Coordinator (RTLC). The Travel Rep will identify which Volunteer will meet which student and provide the Volunteers’ contact info to the RTLC.

ARRIVAL ORIENTATION CONTENT

The issues that affect Arrival Orientation content delivery:

- Students come in several waves, not always in one big group.
- Students might get picked up from the airport by their Host Families or go straight to an Event Family, then receive the actual orientation within seven days of arrival.
- Overnight events are no longer cost-effective with such spread-out arrivals.
- We still need to deliver the standard AFS Educational Goals as outlined in the Student Learning Journey Curriculum.

CONTENT IN MODIFIED ARRIVAL ORIENTATION:

The Arrival Orientation Leader Guide outlines the two options, a longer version (commonly referred to as the “Traditional” Arrival Orientation) and a shorter version (commonly referred to as a “Modified” Arrival Orientation). The Modified Arrival Orientation was created to account for the tighter time constraints on volunteers delivering multiple Arrival Orientation, as well as the capacity that students have to absorb information upon arrival.

- “Long” Arrival Orientation: The recommended time is 5-6 hours in order to cover all activities (required and recommended) and include short breaks.
- “Short” Arrival Orientation: The minimum required time is 3 hours in order to cover the required content. The required activities can be adjusted to accommodate specific scenarios (i.e. only 1 student, small groups of 2-4 students etc.) and may result in Orientations lasting less than 3 hours.

Taking all of the above issues into account, here are the content/delivery modifications:

1. **Host Families should be PRESENT during the Arrival Orientation.** It is important that they hear everything that the student hears; a shorter program will accommodate busy family schedules. Alternately, some Area Teams choose to may run their Host Family Orientation concurrently.

2. **A younger Returnee, who is also a registered Volunteer, should be present at the Arrival Orientation.** It is helpful for them to talk to the students candidly about high school life in the U.S. including the delivery of the message that it is not only important to GO to school, but also PASS--how to achieve that. The Arrival Orientation will include talking points for this returnee orientation leader.

Please refer to the Arrival Orientation Leader Guide for full details.