Host Family Cheat Sheet

There is a lot of adjusting that goes on for you, the host family, and the exchange student during the first days of the exchange. Here are some things you can do, and some things to bear in mind, as you and your student adapt to each other. As you go through the list, be sure to check off each task once it is completed.

— Remind your student to contact their natural family. It's important to let their parent(s) know that they arrived safely.

— Register for school. Be sure to get your student registered at his/her school so that they are ready to jump right into classes.

— Connect with local peers. Connect your student to one or two local high school students who can help show your exchange student around and answer specific questions. Having a familiar face at the beginning of school can be comforting.

— Encourage sibling relationships. If you have children, especially if they are close in age to your exchange student, encourage good relations, but do not expect or require them to be best friends. Let this relationship develop organically. There may be feelings of jealousy at first, just as there might be with any new sibling.

— Fill out the “Participant & Host Family Questionnaire” together. AFS provides the “Participant and Host Family Questionnaire” as a detailed guide for establishing ground rules and answering essential questions. It is located in the Appendices of the Host Family Handbook and your student’s Welcome to the USA handbook. If you cannot find this guide, contact your AFS Liaison ASAP to get a copy. It may feel silly to sit down and talk about family rules and norms but is a resource to help with the adjustment process.

— Map out the neighborhood. Show your student around; point out landmarks like: the post office, the library, the business district, the drugstore or pharmacy, and other places they might need to go to fill their immediate needs. Give your student his/her own map of the area Explain how your student can get to these places (public transportation, asking for rides, etc.), and when it is appropriate to be out an about.

— Provide a contact card. Create a note card with all important family telephone numbers and addresses on them for the student to keep with him/her and even emergency numbers.

— Ensure that your student gets enough sleep. Your student may be unusually exhausted for the first few weeks. Jet-lag combined with the energy required to operate in a new language with new surroundings can take a toll. Encourage your student to get sufficient sleep to keep his/her energy up.

— Record your experience. We encourage exchange students to keep some kind of diary or journal so that they remember their experience in their host country. We recommend that host families do the same to chart your own adjustment and as a keepsake of this amazing experience.

— Set SMART goals. Your student will have language learning and adjustment goals to achieve. You can set some goals too! What would you and your family like to get out of this exchange of culture? What can you do to achieve them?

— Think positively about your experiences! There may be challenges ahead as everyone adjusts to each other. Always try to find the lesson in each challenging experience and use it as an opportunity to help each other grow.
AFS Participant and Host Family Questionnaire

When your student arrives in your home, you will have many things to talk about and many questions to ask each other. The following are some questions to help facilitate your student's integration into your family's life and better understand your expectations of them.

Family and Relationships

1. What should I call you? (Mom/Dad, first names etc.) ____________________________________________

2. If applicable, what is the desired relationship with host sibling(s)? (ex: to teach each other’s' languages, to be good friends, to do activities together, to study together, etc.) ________________________

3. What is an appropriate way to show appreciation? (ex: say Thank-you, carry the groceries, help clean the house, hug, give gifts, help with meals, spend time together, etc.) ___________________________ ________________

4. To host parents, what does a “closed” bedroom door mean? (circle which)
   - Accessible = open to interaction with host family
   - Desire for privacy = would like to be alone to study, rest, etc.

5. To host parents, what does an “open” bedroom door mean? (circle which)
   - Accessible = open to interaction with host family
   - Desire for privacy = would like to be alone to study, rest, etc.

6. When students are in their room, should their door stay open or be closed (if not sleeping or getting dressed)? ______________________________________

7. What are the family rules about digital devices and internet usage? (ex: phones must be given to parents at certain time, no use during meals, no Wi-Fi after certain time, etc.) ______________________________

8. How much time are students expected to spend with the family, together in the same area/room? (mark the line)
   - Very little
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   (Just meals) (meals and after school) (meals, free time, weekends)

9. What are your expectations for family interactions? (ex: have conversations, watch TV/movies together, play sports/do activities together, go to religious services together, go shopping together etc.) ____________________________________________________________

10. How often do you communicate as a family? (ex: Throughout the day, mostly during meals, when we are not busy, on the weekends, while watching TV etc.) ______________________________

11. How does your family usually communicate? (ex: verbally, through texting, telling jokes, discussion on current events, talking about school, non-verbal such as hugging, debating, sarcasm, story-telling etc.) ______________________________

12. Does the family share certain activities in which I will also be expected to participate? (ex: sports games, community events etc.) ______________________________________________________

13. Does the family attend religious services? If so, may I attend them as well? ______________________________
14. **For students who attend religious services different from the family**, is it possible to attend them locally? How is transportation handled? ___________________________________________________

15. Are there any other household rules that have not covered? (ex: being on time, cleanliness, etc.) ___________________________________________________________________________________

**Around the Home**

**Host Parents:**

- Please demonstrate how to correctly use the bath/shower and household appliances to be used by students, such as the microwave, vacuum cleaner, washing machine etc.
- Please **show and explain** what your expectations of “Clean” and “Tidy” are, depending on the room (ex: bathroom, bedroom, kitchen) or situation (ex: before school, after meals, if guests are coming over etc.)

16. What chores am I expected to do on a daily basis? (ex: tidying my bedroom, make my bed, feed the dog, etc.) __________________________________________________

17. Are there any chores that I will share with my siblings? (ex: set/clear the table, wash dishes, take out the garbage, vacuum etc.) __________________________________________________

18. What appliances may I use around the house? (ex: stove/oven, microwave, computer, washing machine, TV etc.) __________________________________________________

19. May I personalize my room by moving the furniture, putting up pictures, etc.? (circle) **Y/N**

- If yes, what should I use to place items on the walls? __________________________________________________

20. Where should I study? (ex: in my room, in the living room, in the dining room etc.) ______________________

21. Are there any areas of the home in which I am not allowed? (ex: master bedroom, basement, garage, etc.) __________________________________________________

22. How should I leave the bathroom after I am finished (door open or closed, fan, lights, heater off/on etc.)? __________________________________________________

23. May I take a **bath** OR **shower**? **When** (AM/PM) and **for how long**? ______________________

- Where should I put my towel, toothbrush, shampoo etc. after I use them? __________________________________________________

24. **For girls**, how/where do I dispose of sanitary napkins and tampons? __________________________________________________

25. Which personal toiletries are shared by the family? Which should I buy for myself? __________________________________________________

26. At what time/s do family members wake up (weekdays/weekends)? __________________________________________________

27. At what time should I wake up (weekdays/weekends)? __________________________________________________

28. Will someone wake me up or is there an alarm clock I must set? __________________________________________________

29. At what time do you expect me to go to bed (weekdays/weekends)? __________________________________________________

30. **What time** and **for how long** may I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>At What Time</th>
<th>For how long</th>
<th>Where (in what room)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV/movies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do homework/study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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31. What are typical meal times (weekdays/weekends)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

32. May I help myself to food from the refrigerator/cupboards between meals? (circle) Y/N

- If yes, what food may I eat as a snack?

33. May I eat food outside of the kitchen? (circle) Y/N

- If yes, in which rooms?

34. What will be my school lunch? (circle which)

- A packed lunch from home (prepared by whom?)
- Lunch from the school cafeteria (lunch money provided by host family)

35. How much time am I allowed to spend online [chatting, social media etc.] per day? (ex: a few hours after school, all day, only in the evenings etc.)

36. What are the rules regarding internet usage. Should I ask first?

37. What should I know about internet safety, protecting my privacy and that of the family?

38. May I invite classmates or friends to come over to the house?

- If yes, at what time/s and under what conditions? (ex: only same gender friends, only when siblings or parents are home, only on weekdays, only until dinner time etc.)

39. What are the rules about spending time with friends/classmates who are the opposite gender? (ex: only with mixed/large groups, not allowed in the home, not alone together, can meet socially, can study together etc.)

40. May I go out with friends at night during the week or on weekends? (circle) Y/N

- If yes, what time is the curfew [the time should I return home] on weekdays/weekend?

Transportation

41. How far is the school from home?

42. How will I get to and from school? (indicate which)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public transportation</th>
<th>By Car</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method (ex: train, bus):</td>
<td>Name of Driver(s):</td>
<td>(ex: walking, by bicycle, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost (provided by host family):</td>
<td>Time of Departure:</td>
<td>Route:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop/Station Location:</td>
<td>Time of Return:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of Trip:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Time of Departure: __________ | Time of Return: __________ | Duration of Trip: __________ |

43. How difficult is it to get around the community by myself (by walking or biking)?

44. Is there a bicycle that I may borrow? ____________________________________________
   • If yes, under what condition? (ex: must wear helmet, carry lock and bike chain, ask permission first, ride on sidewalk etc.) ________________________________

45. Is there public transportation that I may use? (ex: bus, train, subway etc.) (circle) Y/N
   • If Yes, what are the restrictions? ________________________________________________

46. Who will be able to give me a ride to/from after-school activities? ____________________________
   • If yes, how much advanced notice is needed? (ex: a few days, a week, a few hours etc.)
     ____________________________________________________________

47. What are the family expectations about providing transportation? __________________________

48. What are the rules or restrictions for me to arrange for friends to give me a ride? (ex: only friends approved first by parents, only friends with Full Privilege license, only friends over 17 or 18, only host siblings etc.) ____________________________

In the Community
49. Is there anything I should know about safety in certain parts of town? __________________________

50. What are the guidelines about where it is safe/unsafe to walk during the day, after dark? __________

51. What do we do in the event of a fire or other emergency? __________________________

52. What are the telephone numbers of related emergency services? [In USA, it’s 911] __________

53. Where is the nearest hospital or clinic? __________________________

54. How do you secure the home? Lock the doors and windows? __________________________

55. How do I keep my belongings safe such as passport, money, and camera? __________________________

56. If home alone, how should I answer the phone or someone at the door? __________________________

57. What do I need to know about traffic and pedestrian safety? __________________________

58. What do I do if I get lost in town? __________________________

59. What do I do if I don’t have a key and nobody is home? __________________________

60. Is there anything I should know about the high school culture, school rules, peer relations, social tensions? __________________________

61. Are there activities, people, places I should avoid? What should I find out about a party, concert etc. before deciding to go? __________________________
Money Matters

62. How much money might I need for personal purchases? (ex: jeans/clothing, snack foods, movie tickets, fast food, electronics etc.) ________________________________________________________

63. What kind of expenses will I need to pay for myself? ______________________________________

64. Where is the nearest ATM or bank? ____________________________________________________

Budget Sheet for AFS Participants

Your host family has volunteered to support you throughout the year with food, housing and school transportation as a minimum. Expenses beyond that are optional and depend somewhat on the relationship you develop. It is generally helpful to discuss what you have available to spend on a monthly basis as part of the budget discussion.

In order to help budget your personal spending money, please consider which of the following optional items you would like to purchase yourself and plan accordingly. Sometimes local AFS Volunteers have funds available to help cover the cost of such items. Find out if your local AFS Volunteers have funds available to help you cover these costs and make a note of this here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount needed</th>
<th>Do I want to purchase?</th>
<th>How covered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School yearbook $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class photos  $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class ring    $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School trips  $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation expenses $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prom expenses  $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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