

Model School Practices for J-1 Student Exchange

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Created by high school and organization members of CSIET, Spring 2020
To review current CSIET Standards visit: www.csiet.org
To review J-Visa federal regulations visit: [22 CFR Part 62](#)

Purpose

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), in partnership with the secondary-school community, has developed new Model School Practices to assist American schools with the implementation and administration of successful international student exchange programs. CSIET's Model School Practices were developed with valuable input from high school administrators, exchange program managers, and national advocates for youth exchange. These guiding principles seek to provide a foundation for the development of local school policies.

Introduction

Today, more than ever before, we are experiencing challenges on a global scale. As educators and humanitarians, we must work together to overcome global divisions and fear. Sometimes these challenges take more from us than we can bear, and ask more of us than we can provide. Yet amidst the turmoil, we continue to find ways to stay connected. One of the best ways to stay engaged and connected on a global scale is international student exchange. What better way for the youth of today to meet the global challenges of tomorrow than building bridges of cross-cultural understanding!

More than half a century ago the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (better known as the Fulbright-Hays Act), was established “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations.” High-level officials have supported international student exchange every year since. J-1 students are an essential part of the U.S. Department of State’s public diplomacy program.

These Cross-Cultural experiences offer unique opportunities for American schools to help their students and communities:

Learn first-hand about other cultures and customs through the eyes of a peer.

Create life-long friendships across cultures.

Gain new perspectives on the United States and the world, and their role in both.

Begin to understand how tightly connected the peoples and countries of the world are to each other, something our world seriously needs.

Open young minds to the importance of understanding other languages and other cultures, and the roles that they will play in their future college and career experiences.



International student exchange provides students with a cultural experience through which they develop a balanced understanding of the United States and their own cultures. These programs encourage new perspectives for your own students that open their minds to the world. International student exchange helps internationalize American high schools – one exchange at a time. Thank you for your support of these life changing public diplomacy programs. We hope that CSIET's *Model School Practices for J-1 Student Exchange* will aid in your effort to mold our next generation of world leaders.

Collaboration with J-1 Exchange Organizations

As a school leader, you must be able to depend upon the professional support of the J-1 organizations with which you work in order to ensure the greatest possible success for exchanges in your school. You reserve the right to work with exchange organizations that have proven their commitment and responsiveness. You also reserve the right of final approval for all student placements.

Schools should expect J-1 organizations to:

1. Be certified by CSJET and listed in the most current CSJET Advisory List (for the current list visit www.csiet.org).
2. Maintain a network of qualified and trained local representatives living in or near the communities they serve.
3. Interview in person and screen all potential host families, matching student and family interests and provide orientation and ongoing support for both the host family and student.
4. Screen and prepare exchange students, and monitor student progress during the school year, responding to issues or problems as they develop.
5. Ensure that exchange students are compliant with your school's health requirements, including documentation of required immunizations and following other such guidance that your school provides.
6. Provide robust local representative and national office communication with you, and responsiveness to your needs.
7. Receive your enrollment authorization for placements each year and follow your policy on timing and requirements.
8. Arrange host family placements and secure school enrollment authorization before exchange students leave their home countries.
9. Personally interview and screen all potential host families, matching student and family interests and personalities.
10. Not knowingly place exchange students based on their athletic abilities.
11. Make arrangements for tutoring/ESL help in the event that it is needed and ensure that the student accepts financial responsibility for it.

Acceptance of International Exchange Students



Tuition & Expenses

Model Schools waive tuition for students whose J-1 visa is sponsored by U.S. State Department-designated organizations. Exchange students may be required to pay normal school fees, including standard course and extra-curricular activity fees. The school has no obligation to provide any special services, tutoring, supplies, or equipment.



Number of Exchange Students

Model Schools set an exchange student enrollment goal of at least 1% of the total student body while acknowledging that conditions vary locally and this may impact your ultimate enrollment numbers.



Timing of Placement Process

Acknowledging the ongoing challenge of securing Host Family commitments, Model Schools set requirements that provide the flexibility necessary to maximize the enrollment of exchange students.

You can expect organizations to:

- Provide you with advance notice of their intent to place.
- Notify you as soon as students are paired with host families.
- Submit Student applications and Host Family information as early as possible.



Applications

You can expect exchange organizations to provide your school with a complete student application, which includes the following:

- 1 personal letter from the student.
- 2 detailed information on student and natural family.
- 3 proof that the student has sufficient language ability to function in an American classroom.
- 4 original transcript of student's high school grades, with English translation.
- 5 necessary medical history, including proof of immunization as required by the school district, any medical/physical restrictions and a recent physical exam.



Acceptance Eligibility

1

Each exchange student must be qualified to participate in regular classes and maintain a typical schedule - this means an acceptable level of proficiency in the English language, a commitment to treat coursework as important, and the social skills to enjoy participation in social and extracurricular activities.

2

International exchange students must be aware that participating in interscholastic athletic teams means they must comply with district and state athletic eligibility regulations, and that many teams require try-outs.

3

Exchange students are expected to attain passing grades by the end of their first semester.

4

Exchange students' enrollment eligibility will be for one year only. Exchange students and host families are expected to follow all school policies and rules.

5

Exchange students must have medical and accident insurance that meets or exceeds U.S. Department of State guidelines. Exchange students are expected to have proper immunizations and adhere to CDC guidance relative to infectious disease.

6

Since there is a wide variation of graduation policies in the United States, exchange students will understand that they are not guaranteed the ability to graduate or be granted diplomas.

Working with J-1 Students



The most successful and rewarding exchanges occur when exchange students experience American high school life in its fullest form.

Model Schools therefore:



Fully Enroll Students

Understand that the J-1 program is semester/year long in duration and that participants are fully enrolled students.



Offer Students Full Community Rights and Privileges

Provide international exchange students all rights and privileges accorded to community students - EXCEPT the right to a diploma and special and remedial services.



Integrate Students into Your School's Social Fabric

Make every effort to integrate international exchange students into the school's social fabric.



Encourage international exchange students to participate enthusiastically in school activities, to make friends, to make a personal contribution to the school.



Help exchange students spread the word about their country and themselves, both formally by making presentations in classes and to community groups, and informally by encouraging interactions between the exchange student and the student body.