

International Student Exchange

Definitions

For purposes of this procedure, an international exchange student is defined as a student who has been issued a J-1 or F-1 visa in order to enroll in a school in the district. An international exchange organization is an organization registered with the Secretary of State's office in Washington State.

Number of International Exchange Students and Residency

The district determines the number of international exchange students for placement in each school based on the capacity of the school to integrate the international student in a way that is beneficial for all. The district strives to find an acceptable number that recognizes the needs of schools and the opportunities provided by exchange programs. The district may consider the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) suggestion that schools work toward a goal of 1% of the total student population being comprised of exchange students. The district requires that the host families of an international exchange student to reside within the Lynden School

The Lynden School District limits the total number of international exchange students to 1% of student body per school annually..

Selection of International Exchange Organizations

- A. The district will only accept students from international exchange organizations registered with the Office of the Secretary of State of Washington State. (A list of such organizations is available on the website of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction at www.k12.wa.us); and
- B. The district reserves the right to work with international exchange organizations that have proven their commitment to high standards and responsiveness to student and district needs.

Timing of Placement Process

- A. An international exchange organization wishing to enroll an international exchange student in a school in the district will submit to the district a request which provides a complete program description, including the name, address, and telephone number of the local representative. The Lynden School District must receive the application by May 1 for students planning to begin school during first semester the following fall or by October 1 for students planning to begin school for second semester.

- B. The district staff, in consultation with the appropriate building principal, will review the application. The district will provide notification of approval or denial in writing to the program representative in a timely manner, but no later than June 1 for the first semester and November 1 for the second semester.
- C. The district may, at its discretion, choose to accommodate a late applicant because federal J- 1 Visa regulations permit the placement of exchange students up to August 31 of each year.

District Expectations of International Exchange Organizations

Each international exchange organization must:

A. For the District:

1. Each year, obtain written school enrollment authorization for student placements before confirming a placement with a host family;
2. Follow district policy on placement timing and requirements;
3. Maintain a qualified and trained local representative with responsibility for each student including ongoing communication with the school and responding to school needs;
4. Provide the name, address and telephone number of the local program representative who will provide emergency, advisory and liaison services to the district;
5. Notify the district as soon as student and host family match-ups are confirmed and provide the name, address and telephone number of the student's host family to the district; and
6. Forward the student's cumulative records to the district prior to the approval for admission. The cumulative record will include transcripts and the student academic records, in English.

B. For the Host Family:

1. Arrange host family placements before exchange students leave their home country;
2. Personally interview and screen all potential host families, matching student and family interests and personalities; and
3. Maintain ongoing contact with the host family and student.

C. For the Student:

1. Screen and place exchange students based on their academic interests and abilities and not knowingly place exchange students based solely on their athletic abilities;
2. Prepare exchange students, including providing an orientation to the U.S., Washington state, the school and academic expectations;
3. Ensure that the student will receive adequate financial support for the duration of his/her stay in the district;
4. Ensure that exchange students have medical and accident insurance that meets or exceeds U.S. Department of State guidelines;
5. Ensure that exchange students arrive in their host homes and school placements by the first day of classes;
6. Monitor student progress during the school year and respond to issues or problems as they develop;
7. Provide any necessary student tutorial help and support services. In the event that tutoring/ESL or special accommodations are needed, the organization must make arrangements and accept financial responsibility for such services; and
8. Inform the student of student activity costs and/or fees as required by the district.

School Expectations for International Exchange Students

It is the responsibility of the international exchange organization to ensure that the international exchange student is fully aware of the expectations of the school that has accepted placement of that student.

Each international exchange student must:

- A. Be qualified to participate in regular classes and maintain a typical schedule. This means the student must have 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 extra-curricular activities;
- B. Understand that eligibility of international exchange students to participate in extra-curricular athletics, music, forensics, and other such activities may be limited and is determined by the rules and regulations of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association;
- C. Attain passing grades by the end of the first semester;

- D. Know and follow all school policies and rules, and federal regulations related to the visa;
- E. Meet district and state graduation requirements in order to be eligible to receive a high school diploma. Each international exchange student must also understand that it is not the purpose of the international exchange experience to enable international exchange students to receive a Washington state high school diploma. Therefore, international exchange students will not be included in any class ranking lists, nor will a GPA be computed for them. The district will determine whether it is appropriate for the student to participate in graduation ceremonies or to receive a high school diploma;
- F. Pay all normal expenses, including standard course and extra-curricular activity fees;
- G. Present required paperwork, including visa information, medical records, transcripts and host family information, to the school staff member designated to coordinate the international exchange program; and
- H. Understand that enrollment eligibility for international exchange students in public schools is for one school year only.

School Responsibilities

- A. Schools are expected to provide international exchange students with all rights and privileges accorded to resident students — except the right to a diploma; and
- B. The school will make every effort to integrate international exchange students into the school's social fabric. In turn, schools will encourage international exchange students to participate enthusiastically in school activities, to make friends, to make a personal contribution to the school, and to help spread the word about their country and themselves, informally and by making presentations in classes and to community groups and talking to media when asked.

International Exchange Students with F1 Visa

To enroll students with an F-1 visa, a school must apply to the US Department of Homeland Security for F-1 visa authority. Upon receiving this authority, the school becomes the sponsoring organization and must comply with all federal regulations for students with F-1 visas. The school must demonstrate receipt of payment for the annual per pupil cost of attendance for the international exchange student before issuing the I-20 form, which is required for the student to apply for the F-1 visa. As the sponsor, the school is legally responsible for the student, including but not limited to screening, placement with the host family and meeting the needs of the student. In addition, the district expects the student and the school to follow all of the relevant expectations outlined in this procedure.

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