

FPD International Student HANDBOOK



Welcome to FPD's International Student Handbook!

This Handbook has been compiled to provide you with pertinent and necessary information about participating in our International Student Program (ISP).

Goals of the International Student Program (ISP)

The major goal of the ISP is to engage international students with our FPD domestic families. The more interaction between domestic students, the more enriching the experience.

FPD **REQUIRES** students to **speak English** when on campus for class, activities, or sporting events. FPD recommends only speaking English with your host family to improve your English language skills. The best way for you to speed up the progress in learning English and to gain first-hand cultural understanding of the people of the United States is to make friends and speak English. This unforgettable and valuable experience provides a lifetime of memories for both the students and domestic families.

American Communication

Be tolerant of cultural differences.

Be aware of manners that differ from your own. What may seem acceptable in your culture is often unacceptable in the American culture. Slurping soup or holding the bowl/plate right up to one's mouth is quite uncommon in America.

The word "NO" is not an acceptable answer to a faculty member or adult in America. You may ask for clarification or the reason behind the rule to become informed; however, you should always follow the directions given first and then come back to ask your question.

The more you communicate, the more you will learn what is acceptable and appropriate behavior.

Resolving Conflicts in the Home

Communication is key to a successful host family relationship.

If there is potential conflict, these are the steps that need to be taken:

1. Talk to your host family. I would advise you to do this before assuming the worst. This will often solve the issue.
2. If this does not help, go talk to the school. Kristen Kreutner and Brooke Butler are here for you and want to help resolve any concerns that may arise.

You will also be submitting a progress report monthly. If there are any serious issues, the school wants to be informed.

Dating

FPD precludes any form of one-on-one dating. Group outings are permitted in odd number of students attending. Students should not show any signs of public displays of affection such as holding hands or kissing.

Interaction with FPD

Insurance

All FPD international students have medical and hospitalization insurance through the school that extends coverage during their time in the U.S., as long as they're enrolled at FPD.

It is always a good idea to carry copies of your medical insurance information for emergencies. Dental and eye doctors are not covered under this plan. Students should visit the dentist and optometrist when in their home country.

Progress Reports

You will be asked to submit monthly progress reports to FPD. These reports are digital and will be emailed by the Host Family Coordinator. You are required to answer the two questions each monthly; however, it will not take more than 10 minutes to fill out each month unless major problems arise.

School Rules

All international students are required to read and sign the upper school student handbook. All international students will abide by all policies and procedures according to the handbook (tardy policy, dress code, etc.).

AI is not allowed to be used in creation of any work you are submitting to FPD. Translators are not allowed to be used in class for any assessment or work submitted to FPD. Students may use a translator at home to look up a word or read the textbook in their native language.

Sports

FPD requires all international students to participate in a sport or theater production within the first semester. Getting to know your peers will provide a valuable opportunity to make lifelong friends and improve your conversational English.



NOTE

In most cases, homestay commitments last for one year, and both the student and family can re-evaluate after a year as to whether it continues to be a good fit.

Tips for a successful homestay relationship:

1. Be patient with your new host family. In some cases, it's good to remind yourself, "It's not wrong, just different." They are learning just like you.
2. If you are unsure about house rules, just ask your host family.
3. You will attend church with your host family. This is a wonderful way to show respect and gratitude to your host family.

4. It would be wise to use your nightly meals as practice for your English.
5. It is polite to use phrases such as “thank you”, “yes ma'am”, or “yes sir”.
6. If there is an issue, do not let it go unresolved.

Household Rhythms & Expectations

House Rules

All FPD host families/JFIR will require you to do your part in the home. You will be asked to take part in chores or any other household activity. This will help you in learning to take responsibility, as well as respecting the home that has been provided to you. Review the household rules with your host family.

Examples of rules include, but are not limited to:

- Quiet hours (if applicable)
- Wi-Fi restrictions
- Expectations for meals
- Hygiene guidelines
- Advance communication for rides
- Chores

Church attendance

You are expected to attend at least one weekly service with your host family.

Hygiene

A daily shower is required. In addition, you should put on deodorant at least once per day and brush your teeth twice a day. You are expected to wear clean clothes each day.

Chores

Every American family is different when it comes to cleaning their home. They may require you to make your bed each morning and clean up any mess in your room. Please follow the host family guidelines on chores. You are a temporary member of this American family, and you will help with household chores that are shared among the family members. Chores could be as simple as emptying the trash once a week or emptying the dishwasher each morning, in addition to whatever expectations the host family has for you in terms of keeping your own room/bathroom clean.

Room inspections

Host parents are encouraged to check your rooms weekly for cleanliness and to ensure there are no dangerous or forbidden materials. You should take ownership of your space and keep it tidy. Food attracts bugs in Georgia, so eating in your room is prohibited.

Use of equipment in the home

The host family will show you how to use kitchen appliances, TV, DVD player, internet and Wi-Fi, washer, dryer, microwave oven (They will go over what can and cannot be put in the microwave!). The host family will also go over restrictions of when these items can be used.

Bathrooms are also a little different here in the United States. Please use the shower curtain to protect the floors. The shower curtain should be inside the tub. The host family will make sure you have everything you need. It may take a little time to adjust and that is okay, they will help you every step of the way.

English in the home

We require all host families and students to speak English. Dinner time may be the best time to practice your conversational English.

Travel and trips

It may be shocking to you that you cannot fly to another city or travel where you would like on weekends and during school breaks. FPD has a legal obligation to protect you in situations like this, and that while you may have been free to travel even without informing your parents in your home country, host parents (as representatives of FPD) will need to sign off any time you leave the home.

FPD will provide travel guidelines and require waivers for situations like this. You will need to fill one out if you wish to visit family nearby.

You also will need to book your flight back home as soon as possible. You should book your return flight between August 1st-May31st.

Vacations/Weekend Trips

At various times during the year, your homestay family may desire to take vacations or weekend trips. Your host family may ask you to attend with them. If they ask you to attend, This will be an extra expense that your host parents will cover. However, your host family may contact the International Office to request respite care where you will stay while they are gone.

Use of Cell Phones (school rule)

The high school classrooms will have a designated spot for your phone during class. You will have an activity period where you are allowed to access your phone.

Middle school will not have access to their phone until the end of the day.

Ear Buds

Ear buds are never allowed to be used on campus unless your teacher gives you permission.

Host Family Provisions

Breakfast and dinner will be provided by the host family/JFIR on a school day. If you are at school, lunch will always be provided. On weekends, all meals will be provided to you by the host family/JFIR.

If you ever feel like you are still hungry, please communicate that to your host family. They want to make sure you get the food that you need.

It is good to know that eating all that is on your plate is a sign you enjoyed the meal. It is also not a custom in America to slurp your food, that would be considered rude. Leftovers are also very common in a typical American home.

1. **You can ask to go to the grocery store or a local Asian market (if applicable) and pick out the food you like.** Do this early in their time with you (within the first week). It may take a few shopping trips for you to be truly comfortable, but this can be a great way to break the ice and let them know what you like.
2. **Ask them if you would like to cook a meal for them. This can be a fantastic way for them to better learn your culture** and strengthen your relationship with them.

Breakfast

Since many homestay parents work during the week, breakfast may also be a self-help meal where you prepare your own breakfast.

A typical continental breakfast might include the following:

- Juice
- Coffee or tea with milk
- Cold or hot cereal
- Bread, bagels, or muffins with butter, jelly, or jam

These items above are easy and practical things that can be eaten on the go.

Dinner

Dinner time can be a great opportunity to practice English and talk about your day's activities. Ideally, you should expect to have dinner with your host family at least three to four times per week, schedule permitting. Dinners together provide sharing time where the host family members and student discuss the day's events or activities and/or upcoming events/activities. Please ask for more if you are still hungry.

Due to host family commitments outside of the home, there may be a periodic need for you to have dinner alone. Your host family will provide you with instructions on how to prepare dinner. If you will not make dinner due to sports or other events, let the host family know as early as possible if you cannot attend. It will let them know if they should save food for you or not. You may have times when you travel with a sports team and a meal is provided.

Lunch/Snacks

School lunches at FPD are included in your tuition as a part of the international program. Lunches are provided by your host family on weekends, school breaks, holidays, and faculty in-service days. **You are responsible for purchasing your own snacks on campus in the school store.**

Transportation

You are assigned homestay families whose homes are located in safe and respectable areas of the city or town.

It is very important that you arrive at class on time. It's important to communicate well, often, and clearly regarding transportation needs. A large calendar posted in the home can be particularly helpful, as can an online shared calendar. You want the family to be aware of any extracurricular activities.

FPD does not allow international students to drive. Once you have graduated you may choose to pursue a drivers license in the United States.

Leaving the house

Many of you are accustomed to leaving home to go to a coffee shop, restaurant, etc., on your own in your home country via public transportation, often with no notice. You may sometimes feel particularly restricted in the U.S. and feel bad asking for a ride to the mall, etc., anytime you want to go out.

There are a couple of ways to help you feel freedom while respecting these boundaries.

First, ensure that any excursions follow FPD policies in terms of who is taking you.

Second, ask for permission 24-48 hours prior to the transportation need.

For example, you may ask: "I'm meeting my friends in 30 minutes at the mall. Can you take me now?" This type of late requests are not appropriate.

You may ride with a friend or a family as long as it is approved by your host family/JFIR. Note: Per the dating policy, you are not allowed to ride in a car with a person of the opposite sex alone.

Conclusion

We hope that this handbook has provided you with the information you need to make your participation in FPD's International Program a successful and rewarding experience.