



United States Department of State  
*Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs*  
Washington, DC 20522  
*www.state.gov*

Dear Student,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, welcome to the Secondary School Student exchange program. This program is a great opportunity for you to experience first-hand the culture and diversity that the United States has to offer. As a valued participant in this program, you are among thousands of high school students from around the world serving as your country's citizen ambassador in the United States. We want your experience to be both positive and rewarding.

As a participant in a formal exchange program you will attend an accredited public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family who has opened their home and hearts to welcome you to the United States. We know that with a positive attitude and respect for others you will achieve a close and successful relationship with your host family.

We understand that you may have concerns about leaving your family and friends at home to come to the United States and those are very normal concerns to have. I want you to know that your decision to come to the United States is important to us and that your health, safety and well-being are our highest priority. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization with any concerns or problems you might have, especially if you find yourself in a circumstance that threatens your personal health, safety or well-being or a situation that makes you uncomfortable. If your sponsor organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should not hesitate to contact the Department of State directly through the phone number or email address provided below. A Department staff person will be available to hear your concerns and assist you.

Your sponsoring organization will provide you with an identification card, which lists your host family placement address and telephone numbers, a telephone number which affords immediate contact with the program sponsor, the program sponsor's organizational representative, and the Department of State's toll free number (1-866-283-9090) and email address ([jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov)). You should keep this card with you at all times and contact us if you have any concerns about your health, safety or well-being.

Best wishes for a rewarding and fun experience. Welcome to the United States!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley S. Colvin".

Stanley S. Colvin  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Private Sector Exchange



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Dear American Host Family,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host a Secondary School Student exchange participant. This is a unique opportunity for you to experience first-hand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own. Through this program, you are among thousands of American families who volunteer to serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States.

Secondary School Student programs have been a part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949. Approximately 30,000 secondary school students from around the world participate in this program each year. The good will of American host families in opening their homes to these young international visitors is essential to the success of this program. Thank you!

The health, safety and well-being of the young people who participate in this program are, collectively, our highest priority. A host family has many responsibilities, the most important of which is the care and well-being of a young person from a foreign country for an academic semester or academic year. The foreign student is a guest in your home and in our country and you may be the first "real Americans" this young person encounters. How you interact with this student will create a powerful image about our country and its people.

I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for you and the exchange student. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if the student's personal health, safety or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact the Department of State directly at our toll free number (1-866-283-9090) that has been established for this purpose. In addition, your sponsoring organization will provide your student with an identification card, which lists your address and telephone numbers, a telephone number which affords immediate contact with the program sponsor, the program sponsor's organizational representative, and the U.S. Department of State's toll free phone number and email address ([jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov)). The exchange student should keep this card with him/her at all times and contact us if they have any concerns about their health, safety or well-being.

The U.S. Department of State is deeply appreciative of your kindness and generosity in making this educational and cultural experience possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley S. Colvin".

Stanley S. Colvin  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Private Sector Exchange