

Carmel Christian school



2019-2020

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POLICIES

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The Beginning

Carmel Christian School began an international student program January 2013. After successful evaluation from the federal SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Internet System), the following policies were instituted. These policies are necessary in order to legally protect all parties involved, especially as more and more Christian schools are adding international students to their communities. The statistics would indicate that, although fifteen years ago this wasn't an area of concern for private schools, we cannot ignore the recent trend of international students joining our school communities and the staggering statistics of how many international students are already in the United States or seeking to come here in the near future.

There are four primary areas where official school policy is needed to ensure that all parties in this international student -homestay families, and the schools partnership - are fully compliant with the law and are protected from exposure to potential liability. These four areas include having policies that ensure compliance with official government requirements, policies protecting the rights and interests of international students and their families, policies ensuring due diligence and liability protection for the school, and finally- policies ensuring liability protection for homestay parents who are hosting international students.

This document provides a comprehensive policy which articulates clearly and thoroughly what a school must have in place in order to ensure that it is prepared to implement an effective international student program, and that all four aforementioned areas of legal concern are satisfied. While this document provides policies specific to Carmel Christian School, these policies might easily be modified and applied to any school wishing to implement an international student program. While many of these policies are not based on formal legal mandates, they must be in place to meet the legal practicalities of liability protection and contract law.

WHY HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

Our Purpose

Our school believes that such a program will serve to further our mission rather than increase its profits. Carmel Christian exists to provide an excellent education, built on biblical truth, which equips students to reflect Christ to the world. Our vision is that we would be the school of choice for those students desiring to make an impact on the world for Christ now, while developing their hearts, souls, and minds to impact the world for Christ in their future. Bringing international students into our community allows us to both shape our stateside students' awareness of and compassion for the world and also allows **international students to encounter Christ** as a result of being members of our Christ-centered community. As Dan Egeler, Senior Vice President of ACSI Global, explains:

We live in a global culture that will be increasingly interdependent in the future. As educational institutions of excellence, Christian schools around the world need to equip their students to be active participants in the emerging global village. A program that enrolls international students is one of the most effective means to inculcate a global understanding into your school's culture. Your school can also have an impact on the international students coming to your school by having them observe living Christianity in the host home, school, and church and then sending them back to their passport countries as servant leaders (2011).

COMMUNICATION

School/Host Family/Student

Many of the policies in this category center on the importance of communication between the school, the homestay family, and the international family. If we clearly communicate with students and their host families, many of the difficulties inherent in community can be avoided and issues can be preempted. Clear policies eliminate the danger of assumptions. Full disclosure is critical so that international students and their parents can be fully aware of the school and program expectations. Parents agree to comply with the rules and expectations of the program in order to fulfill the contract.

- It is vital for us to have a clear articulation of our school and student profile, which should appear in writing, as this protects both the student and the school.
- It is not required that our international students profess a saving faith in Jesus Christ. As is the case with other families in our community, we partner with a believing parent for the purpose of the student's education and discipleship regardless of their student's spiritual maturity. Similarly, the homestay parents partner with the school to support the school mission and help the international student to grow in his or her understanding and relationship with Jesus.
- It is critical to clarify the school's mission for the student right from the start, and that we get agreement from international parents, that they acknowledge in writing our mission as a school and agree to abide by our expectations even if they are not professing Christians. The school will also receive a written parental agreement which ensures that the international student's family has reviewed and read the provided information about the school and is willing to accept the expectations of the school.
- The school determines how many international students it wishes to have, both in terms of actual numbers and percentage within the student body, and needs to clarify what student visa types it is open to receive. We recommend that our school accept only students with F-1 visa status as these are issued to students who are in the States for educational purposes. We recommend that international students make up no greater than five percent of our entire high school student body.
- It is best practice to secure an International Student Agency that can act as a liaison between the school and the student's biological parents for the primary purposes of managing finances, school documents, academic support, guardianship, insurance and homeland security requirements. A short list of agencies is located in the Carmel Christian School International Homestay Family Handbook

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

TOEFL

We have very clear and specific qualifications for admission, specifically with regard to English proficiency. While this might seem restrictive, unless the school wishes to implement an entire ESL program to run concurrently with its mainstream academics, the international students must demonstrate a certain level of proficiency simply to function in a mainstreamed English classroom.

- The following TOEFL scores are recommended so that students can function successfully in our school:
60 minimum in the 9th grade; 65 minimum in the 10th; 70 minimum in the 11th
- The following TOEFL Jr. scores are recommended so that students can function successfully in our school:
730-780 expanding 9th
785-840 accomplished
845-900 superior
- A High School diploma and graduation from Carmel Christian are not guaranteed to any international student. The student needs to meet regularly with the guidance counselor to ensure that he or she is meeting the requirements for graduation. The school will not admit a student if it is unlikely that the student will be able to meet all of the graduation requirements.
- Carmel Christian will provide English support services to help our international students be successful if necessary. In the first year of their enrollment in the program, all international students will be required to participate in a regular ELL class. Additional money will be collected if services need to be secured through the Student Achievement Center at Carmel Christian School.

- Students will only be allowed to use a translation device in the first semester of their enrollment at Carmel Christian. While a translator can be a helpful tool in assisting students in transitioning to an English-only environment, students are expected to gradually wean themselves from the need for this tool. After the first semester students will not be allowed the use of such a device. School electronic devices will be viewed in English.
- Speaking in English is strictly required in all classrooms with the exception of foreign language classrooms where the language being studied must be spoken. Similarly, English should be the only language used in any setting where others are present who do not speak the native language of international students. In order to effectively foster a learning environment for students learning English, this policy is strictly enforced and violation is subject to disciplinary action by the administration. Conversations occurring at school in the presence of others who do not speak the same language should occur only in English, including places such as the cafeteria, hallways, classrooms, and chapel.

STUDENT CARE & PROTECTION

Safe School and Home Environment

The school will provide an international student handbook (CCS Policy Handbook) to foster the homestay experience. This handbook will offer clarification both to students and to host families and will clearly articulate the expectations for both parties. Expectations for students such as church attendance, chapels, enrollment in Bible classes, etc. will appear in this handbook so that a student knows full well what will be expected of him or her before he arrives in the USA. The handbook will also stipulate expectations for homestay families so that they will treat their international student guests appropriately.

- Carmel Christian School protects the right of every student to enjoy an environment that respects their inherent dignity and is free from harassment in any form. Harassment can include a pattern of remarks, gestures, jokes, physical contact, teasing, excessive attention, and bullying. Harassment and the abuse of students is illegal, morally wrong, and contrary to biblical principles. The homestay program expressly forbids sexual harassment, whether opposite or same-sex, and forbids any offensive conduct or expressions toward another student with respect to gender, race, color, national origin, or age.
- Within the homestay family, international students should expect to be provided three meals per day, including lunches on school days. Students must make lunch arrangements with their homestay families upon their arrival in the home. Some families may choose to send a bag lunch with their students while others may prefer to place money on a lunch account and allow the student to purchase lunch at school. Homestay families are only expected to provide a reasonable amount of food or money to purchase food at school for the student. Students who eat large quantities of food should expect to assist their homestay family in buying some of their own food or using personal funds to help purchase lunches at school. When homestay families eat together the student is expected to participate in the meal as a family member.
- Each homestay student will have his or her own bedroom in the home to allow appropriate privacy. This room should be large enough to allow the student to keep his or her personal belongings.

HOST PARENT SELECTION PROCESS

The Home Visit

CCS provides screening and selection of appropriate families for their homestay experience as the homestay family will provide the greatest foundation of stability for a student living abroad. As our top priority is to protect and care for these children the following policies must be in place to ensure their safety and care. The following policies serve to protect the student, as they ensure that we have hired appropriate families to host and care for them. This thorough process also serves the auxiliary function of protecting the school, as it demonstrates that the school has done its due diligence (i.e. has done everything in its power to thoroughly evaluate each homestay family before placing students within the home).

- The school will commit itself to a careful process of finding, training, and retaining the optimal family fit for each of our international students. The school diligently works towards finding the best families, equipping those families by providing the best possible resources, and assisting them by formulating and putting the right policies, procedures, and helps in place to provide guidance. The school will conduct an evaluation at the end of each year to refine and repeat the process.

- Every potential host family must submit a thorough application in order to be selected to homestay international students. This will include information necessary to obtaining a clear picture of the family, their home life, and their preparedness to appropriately care for a homestay student. This application will include the following information:
 - Parent testimonies and church information
 - Family information
 - Family structure- housing survey
 - Household information
 - Answers to frequently asked questions
- Before the school conducts the initial interview with a Homestay candidate family, every adult in the homestay environment (i.e. anyone who is 18 or older) must agree to submit to a criminal background check.
- Any other adult, whether related to the homestay family or not, who spends the night with the homestay family while the international student is residing there, must also submit to a background check.
- Upon request, Homestay family applicants must provide two personal references from individuals not related to them and a pastor's reference which attests to their character and confirms their church participation.
- Each homestay family will be formally interviewed by the school. At this interview the responsibilities and expectations of homestay families will be reviewed. Policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure clarity. At this interview the family will be provided with a copy of the Homestay Family Handbook.
- The final step for approving a homestay family will be a home visit by members of the school administration. This will allow the school to meet the entire family and get a feel for the home environment. This will also provide an opportunity to convey the need for complete family buy-in; a homestay experience won't be successful unless every member of the household is in agreement with hosting an international student.
- Once a homestay family has been selected and matched with an international student, the school will take pictures of the home and family that will be hosting each respective student and will send these to the student to share with his family and prepare him or her for the move.
- It is recommended that the school create a support structure to facilitate the success of homestay parents in meeting the needs of their international students. The school will work to equip families for success in serving their homestay students.
- All homestay parents will be required to attend host parent meetings throughout the year to prepare and train their families for this experience.
- The school will seek to create opportunities for international homestay students to become fully joined to the Carmel Christian community.

PARTNERING WITH CARMEL

How It Works

Every student must have a Skype video interview prior to their acceptance to Carmel Christian. This experience will allow the school to verify the student's English proficiency.

- A clear international student application process will be conducted to ensure that each student is a good fit for the school.
- A Carmel Christian Family Handbook is available to homestay families which will serve to regulate the homestay experience. This handbook will offer clarification both to students and to host families and will clearly articulate the expectations for both parties. Expectations for students such as church attendance, chapels, Bible classes, etc. will appear in this handbook so that a student clearly understands and agrees to comply with school expectations prior to arrival in the United States.
- International parents and students are expected to read the Homestay Family Handbook and both will sign indicating they agree to abide by the handbook policies. This ensures that international parents have read and agree to the expectations of the school. The school is authorized to take action when a policy has been clearly violated by the student (or parent).

- International students and parents are required to complete all requested training materials and attend all orientation sessions offered by the school.
- All international homestay students will be required to participate in student orientation. The orientation program may include an overview of all homestay program policies and procedures as well as a review of all school policies and procedures. This orientation will also allow new students to be introduced to homestay peers as well as to school procedures and rules.
- If a student is sent home prematurely for just cause, the tuition money paid by the parents for that academic year will not be refunded.
- The natural parents will grant the school a signed Power of Attorney letter so that the school may act and function fully *in loco parentis* with regards to such concerns as medical care while the international student is under the school's guardianship.
- Upon request, the international parent must provide an affidavit confirming evidence of its financial ability to pay tuition and all other international program costs prior to the student's initial application for an I-20 (school sponsorship for educational visa). The parents may be asked to also provide a deposit of 5,000 dollars at the time of acceptance into the program to hold the student's place and cover some of the initial costs of the homestay program. If it is discovered that a student or his/her parents has falsified any of their financial information, this is grounds for the student's immediate dismissal.
- The natural family of the international student is expected to pay all bills promptly.
- **Speaking in English** is strictly required in all classrooms with the exception of foreign language classrooms where the language being studied must be spoken. Similarly, English should be the only language used in any setting where others are present who do not speak the native language of international students. In order to effectively foster a learning environment for students learning English, this policy is strictly enforced and violation is subject to disciplinary action by the administration. Conversations occurring at school in the presence of others who do not speak the same language should occur only in English, including places such as the cafeteria, hallways, classrooms, and chapel.

HOMESTAY PARENT PROTECTION

We are on your side

The following policies serve to regulate the homestay experience for the benefit of international students and homestay families alike. The overriding principle behind these policies is that we want families to be able to function as families and bring international students into their homes. It is important to create policies that allow for flexibility. Ultimately these family policies and student policies must work together in order to meet the needs of both. It is vital that the school seek to maintain open communication with homestay families throughout their service; our goal is to provide support for both students and families as they journey together in this homestay experience.

- International homestay students are under the direct care and supervision of Carmel Christian School and the homestay parents assigned to them. As such, students must respectfully comply with the rules and expectations of their CCS homestay family.
- Each homestay family is encouraged to create a "Family Covenant" unique to its home. This can be submitted before the first five weeks of school. In essence this covenant allows students to understand how they can effectively become part of their respective families. This covenant eliminates grey areas both for the student and the homestay parents and contains information concerning household rules such as expected chores, manners, technology use, curfew, etc.
- A monthly email from the homestay parents to the international students' parents in their home country is recommended. This should provide information regarding their child's experience in the school- academically, socially, and experientially. This email will be shared with Carmel's International Program Coordinator for purposes of accountability.
- Each international student will purchase a medical and accident policy (for example, the one offered through ACSI) This policy provides 100 percent coverage for accidents, and has a small ER deductible in the case of emergency. This policy will ensure that students will be able to pay for their own medical coverage if such need arises.

- When an issue arises within the homestay experience, the first priority is to address and work through the issue between the student and host family according to the Matthew 18 principle. If the two parties are unable to reach a harmonious agreement, then the school may be asked to intervene and arbitrate the dispute. As a last resort, school counselor, student coordinator or Dean of students, may be brought in to settle and arbitrate a dispute.
- Homestay students will be allowed to travel home or remain with their homestay families over **official** American holiday breaks. Holidays-Christmas and Easter. A student who wishes to travel on their own or during these designated breaks must submit a permission to travel form signed by his or her parents. A request form must also be submitted at least 3 weeks in advance which must be approved by the school before the student can travel.
- The student will not be allowed to borrow money from either the homestay family or the school for any reason.
- If an international student wishes to host visitors, he or she must receive permission from the school and the homestay parents well in advance. Out-of-town visitors such as parents and siblings are expected to obtain their own lodging outside of the homestay home unless the homestay parents specifically invite the visitors to stay in their home. Visitors should not impact the student's normal activities and responsibilities as a community member. Any alteration in schedule that might occur due to such visitors should be discussed in advance with the homestay parents. Visitors of the opposite gender are not permitted to stay overnight in the homestay residence under any circumstances and are not allowed in the student's bedroom area.

THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

The following are policies which will help to regulate the homestay experience in the best interests of the homestay family and their international guests.

Transportation

- **Homestay students are not allowed to own or operate a motor vehicle while enrolled at Carmel Christian School. It is expected that transportation for the international student be provided when needed by the homestay family.** Students are responsible for communicating and coordinating with their homestay families to meet their transportation needs so that the parents can plan and meet the needs of every member of the household. International homestay students may only ride in vehicles driven by their own homestay parents, another Carmel Christian homestay parent, or another school-approved driver. Homestay students are not permitted to ride with any other drivers without the express approval of their homestay parents.
- **Students under the age of 18 should not use ride sharing services (Uber Lyft, etc.)** without an accompanying adult. Carmel Christian School priority is to ensure the safety of all students, therefore we recommend minors use only taxi services such as Yellow Cab when considering the use of public transportation.
- Compliance with the rules of the Carmel Christian homestay program and the expectations of the homestay family is expected at all times from international students. Disciplinary consequences are intended to be formative - and not punitive - in nature; as much as possible, consequences for any misbehavior will be appropriate and suited to the offense. The Carmel Christian administration retains the prerogative to assign specific consequences up to and including expulsion for school or homestay related violations. However, in cases warranting expulsion, the administration may, at its own prerogative, choose to allow a student to withdraw in lieu of expulsion if circumstances warrant.
- International students are expected to abide by the rules and expectations outlined in the "Family Covenant" of their respective family. Homestay parents are authorized to discipline students just as they would their own children for breaches of the Family Covenant and in a manner consistent with Carmel Christian School and the Homestay Family Handbook. Failure to comply with the expectations of the Family Covenant may result in disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion from the school.
- Any international student, who fails to consistently fulfill the expectations of the school, including compliance with their respective Family Covenant, may be placed on 'provisional' status. A student who is on provisional status will enjoy fewer privileges and less freedom than other international students. Each contract is created for the individual student based upon that student's need for improvement in specific areas of maturity and character development. A provisional student will be offered a contract according to which he or she may remain at Carmel Christian contingent upon its fulfillment during an agreed upon contract period. If at any time during the contract period the student is found to be in violation of the terms of the contract, the Carmel Christian administration reserves the right to dismiss the student from the school. A student who has fulfilled the stipulations of the contract may be returned to non-provisional status at the discretion of the

administration. If deemed necessary, a student's provisional contract status may be extended. Carmel Christian reserves the prerogative to not offer re-enrollment at the end of the contract period if the student has not made progress in the areas addressed by his or her specific contract.

- While the international student is enrolled in the school, he or she agrees that English will be spoken with the host family and whenever there are individuals present who don't speak his or her native language. This will ensure sensitivity towards other who don't understand the student's native language, and also will encourage the student to develop his or her English skills. The exception to this policy would be a student's communication with his or her parents (via phone or computer), in which case the student's native language would be allowed. If the student's conversation with his parent is causing an interference with the home environment, homestay parents have the authority to ask a student to move to another location in the house to complete it. Otherwise, students are expected to speak in English at all times while at home or with the homestay family.
- It is required that all international students in the homestay program purchase a cell phone, as the majority of American homes utilize cell phones as their primary means of family communication. The international student's family is responsible to pay for the student's own cell phone plan and use. Some homestay families may elect to add the student to the family cell phone plan. In this event, the student would bear the responsibility of paying for his or her share of the family cell phone bill. If a land-line home phone is available in the home, the international student is responsibility to establish with the homestay parents when and how it is acceptable for the student's use. A student should never use the landline phone for an international call except in an emergency.
- Homestay families have the authority to monitor and possibly restrict a student's cell phone use in a manner consistent with the Family Covenant. The student should discuss any expectations regarding cell phone use with the homestay family upon arrival in the home.
- When in the homestay environment, school or involved in family life, international students are required to dress in a manner consistent with the expectations of the school and their homestay parents in keeping with the respective Family Covenant. Homestay parents reserve the right to determine what is considered acceptable or unacceptable dress while living in the household. Clothing is to be purchased by the student and it is not the responsibility of the homestay family; however, any clothing purchased and worn by the student should be consistent with family and school guidelines. Continual disregard for school or homestay family policies regarding dress may result in disciplinary measures including student provisional status or expulsion from Carmel Christian School.

STUDENT HOMESTAY EXPECTATIONS

An international student is expected to participate in the domestic structure of their homestay family, which may include fulfilling assigned chores around the home. While the student is not to be treated as a servant in the home, he or she is expected to develop a heart of service toward others by being willing to contribute to tasks around the home. A family has the authority to assign disparate household duties to different children in the home appropriate to their levels of mental or physical development.

Return to home country reasons

The Carmel Christian School Handbook will clearly state the conditions whereby a student would be sent home. Immediate dismissal may be the consequence for any of the following reasons:

- Criminal behavior
- Drug use
- Inability to demonstrate the ability to pay
- A poor work ethic/motivation in a student
- Plagiarism/academic dishonesty
- An attitude hostile to Christianity
- Repeated patterns of disobedience in school or host home
- Dishonesty in application
- Emotional sickness
- Sexual activity

- International students are prohibited from participating in any high risk activity that may result in serious injury or death in the case of an accident, such as hang-gliding, bungee-jumping, or sky-diving. If a student participates in any such an activity, the school reserves the right to dismiss the student immediately. If a student engages in a potentially dangerous activity like skateboarding or skiing, the student is required to wear appropriate safety equipment. The student's international family must sign a form acknowledging the school's rule against high-risk behavior and a waiver assuming responsibility for their child should he or she choose to participate in any activity of this nature.
- Students are expected to follow their homestay family's expectations in terms of bedtime as outlined in its specific Family Contract and respect quiet or study hours in the home. Students should understand that each family may vary in its specific expectations regarding study or quiet hours and bedtime. Students are to respect whatever the family requirements are while they are members of that household. Any exceptions to the family's policy regarding study or quiet hours and bedtimes must be approved in advance through a student's direct appeal to the homestay parents.
- Students are required to attend church regularly with their respective homestay families. Some families may attend church functions on a more frequent basis than others, and it is at the discretion of each student's family to decide which of these functions their homestay student are expected to attend. Students who wish to visit another church on occasion must seek permission from their homestay parents and make appropriate arrangements with their homestay parents to do so.
- Each student is required to report all technological devices with his or her homestay parents upon his or her arrival in their home. Possession of an unreported or unregistered device is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from Carmel Christian. As members of the household, students are required to access the internet exclusively through the homestay family's internet connection and are not permitted to connect to the internet through any other means while in the home. Homestay parents reserve the right to regulate a student's computer activity through the use of internet filters or other filtering programs as outlined in the Family Covenant. Students are required to turn off and possibly turn in all technology devices to the homestay parents at the family bedtime prescribed in the Family Covenant.
- The Carmel Christian School International Homestay program exists in union with the vision of Carmel Baptist Church and Carmel Christian School, to equip students to reflect Christ to the world. We realize that all of our international students may not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, international students who are admitted into this school understand our mission and agree to behave in a manner consistent with the code of conduct they signed upon applying to the school.

Our Mission

Carmel Christian School exists to provide an excellent education, built on biblical truth,
which equips students to reflect Christ to the world.

