Student Handbook

Educatius International
22 Batterymarch Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
800-301-6014
www.educatius.org

Rev. 6/2016

Table of Contents

Page	Topic
3	Welcome
4	Travel to the US
4	Getting Settled in the US
6	Your Host Family
7	Your School
7	Learning the Language
8	Hints for a Successful Experience
8	Program Rules
10	Computer Usage
11	Sexual Abuse or Molestation
12	Insurance
13	Important Phone Numbers

Welcome!

Dear Educatius Student,

We share your excitement for the opportunity to spend a year in the US. You have chosen to spend this year living in the home of an American family and becoming a part of the community and school.

This handbook is designed to prepare you for a great experience. We suggest you read this handbook with your parents so they can support you through the year with a better understanding of what you will be experiencing. The handbook will help you understand what living with a family and going to school in America will be like. Please be sure to read the entire handbook; being able to make choices and act independently is a big responsibility.

Perhaps you have mixed feelings about your departure to the United States for the year. You and your parents are probably both excited and a little scared. Please discuss the program rules and guidelines with your family.

Please be assured that the American family that is waiting for you in the United States is prepared to care for you in the same way they would care for their own children. You will also have an International Coordinator assigned to you. This coordinator will be your advocate and supporter throughout the year.

Our best wishes to you and congratulations as you embark on a wonderful international experience.

Sincerely,

The Staff at Educatius International

National Office Contact Information

Educatius International
22 Batterymarch 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

24 Hour Emergency Number
(800) 301-6014
1-479-222-6714 from outside the US

Travel to the United States

Before you leave you will need to be sure you have your travel documents easy to access but also in a safe place. What **must** you have?

* PASSPORT * VISA DOCUMENTS * ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTS * IMMUNIZATION RECORD
* FLIGHT TICKETS/ITINERARY * ORIGINAL I-20 (a copy will **not** get you into the US)

Pre-departure Checklist
□ Read this Student Handbook
□ Make sure you have all your necessary documents
□ Confirm your flights
□ Get immunizations required for school and bring documentation
□ Make a list of any medications or prescriptions, including eye glasses
□ Choose some small gifts for your host family
□ If anything has changed since you completed your application such as health issues and other important information, inform your agent immediately!

Never leave your luggage out of your sight during travel. On your international flight you will receive a Customs Declaration Form that needs to be completed before you land.

When you land in the US, you will go through immigration where they will check your I-20, passport, and visa, and stamp it. Customs officials will keep your Customs Declaration Form. When you are finished, you will exit the Customs area and change to your connecting flight or be met by your International Coordinator and/or your host family.

EMERGENCY OR MISSED FLIGHT—CALL EDUCATIUS IMMEDIATELY
1-800-301-6014 or 1-479-222-6714 and select number 4

Getting Settled in the US

Many students come to the USA with all the right clothes, documents, and other things from home, but they have not prepared for the trip in the most important way. They need to be ready to adjust and understand differences. Your understanding of yourself, together with your desire to learn, your curiosity, and your openness to new things, will help you more than anything else you can bring.

You may feel that everything is too different; nothing seems familiar or comfortable to you.

This is very common. Almost everyone who lives in a foreign country feels this way at some time. When it becomes a problem for you, it is called "Culture Shock". Culture shock means that your mind is feeling somewhat overwhelmed and tired of dealing with all the new and different things you are living with daily in this new culture. You may even feel confused, angry, or isolated. You might think people don't like you. You may feel lonely. You may even wonder if you should give up and go home. If this happens, call your coordinator. He or she can help.

Culture shock happens to most people. If you experience culture shock, you should not think that you have failed or that you cannot be a successful student or part of this new family. You absolutely can, and Educatius is here to help you.

At the beginning, you will have to translate everything you are hearing and then translate your own thoughts again in order to speak to your American friends and family. This will make you tired and you may even get a headache. Don't worry, this is normal. Within a few weeks you will be amazed at how much your English has improved!

Your host family and coordinator know about culture shock and will be able to help you. Talk to them about how you are feeling. Try not to send your natural parents unhappy letters, emails, or call home when you are feeling sad or lonely. Your natural parents are far away and will be worried and upset to hear you are unhappy. Your host family and coordinator are nearby and will be able to advise you and encourage you. Reach out to them.

How will you know if you have "culture shock"? Some of the common physical and mental indications are:

- I am eating more or less than I usually do.
- I am sleeping too much or too little.
- I have stomachaches or headaches that I don't usually have.
- I cry more than normal.
- I feel helpless and think I need help from people from my own country.
- I get angry more often and at things that are not really important.
- I don't want to learn English or speak it anymore.
- I think and say that everything about my culture is better than anything in America.
- I am afraid to go to new places or do new things.
- I am very homesick– I wish I were at home.

What can you do if you think you have culture shock?

- ✓ Remember that most people living in or visiting foreign countries have these feelings. You are **not** the only one feeling this way!
- ✓ Talk to your host family or coordinator and ask for suggestions.
- ✓ Exercise, do sports, go for a walk.
- ✓ Relax, take a deep breath, and be glad you have this amazing opportunity to live in a different country and learn about the world.
- ✓ Get busy with a hobby or activity or join a club.
- ✓ Plan new tasks each day that will help you meet new people and accomplish something– like preparing a new food to eat, talking to someone new, accepting an invitation to go somewhere.
- ✓ Take care of yourself by getting enough rest and eating healthfully. Everything seems worse if you are physically tired or don't feel well.
- ✓ Find the humor in situations. Being able to laugh at some of your mistakes is healthy.

Your Host Family

The most important part of getting settled in the US is becoming a member of your family. You are not a guest; you are a family member. That means you need to learn how they work and live together, so that you can fit in. Your family will have expectations and guidelines for you. You will be expected to keep your room clean and pick up after yourself. Making your bed should become part of getting up in the morning. Remember that even though you have some "personal space", your room is still part of the host family's house.

It is a very good idea to talk to your family about what household responsibilities you should do. Also ask ***how*** to do them. You will need to do your share when you live with an active family in which all family members help with the housework. You may not like this, but it is expected of you. Your host family will be providing 3 meals a day, except for lunches that are purchased at school. If you like special food and snacks that your host family does not usually have, make sure to purchase them with your own money when you are at the grocery store.

One of the best ways to learn is to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask your host family questions about anything that has to do with life in their family. They do not expect you to know everything and will want you to have all the information you need to be successful. Some common topics for questions are listed below.

- ? Laundry
- ? Food

- ? Chores
- ? Clothing
- ? Curfew
- ? Bedroom
- ? Bathroom
- ? Friends
- ? Payment responsibilities
- ? Computer and phone usage

Educatius encourages each host family to use a worksheet to go over their household rules with you soon after you arrive. You should not expect your American host family's rules to be the same as the ones you have at home with your natural family. This is part of your American experience.

Your School

Life in school can be very exciting. Your school will have many opportunities you may never have experienced before. You should take advantage of getting involved in clubs and activities. You have the chance to make friends for life and learn new things.

School attendance is mandatory at every school. You are required to attend school every day and not be late for any classes. You need to take a full day of classes including an English class. Your school is expecting you to be a model student and keep your grades up on your own. You will need to maintain at least a C average in <u>each</u> class. Please be aware that the school can cancel your I-20 at any time if you do not follow the rules of the school and maintain your grades.

Learning the Language

What can you do to improve your English skills as quickly as possible?

- ✓ Practice your English by getting involved. The more you interact with English speaking friends and your host family, the faster your English will improve.
- ✓ Avoid spending time online or on the phone with friends and family from your country. This will delay your success with speaking English.
- ✓ Watch movies and listen to music in English rather than your native language.
- ✓ Be active with your host family, ask questions and have them write answers down if you

don't understand. It is fine for you to tell your host family that you didn't understand and ask them to repeat it again, too.

- ✓ If you have a young host brother or sister, practice your English by reading simple story books to him or her.
- ✓ Read the newspaper to see what is going on in your community.

Hints for a Successful Experience

- ✪ Stay busy, and join as many activities as possible. There will be school clubs and extra activities available as options.
- ✪ Show appreciation to those around you. The host family and teachers need to know you are thankful for what they are offering you. Smile and say "thank you" often!
- ✪ Be on time for classes and turn in your homework and classwork when due. Follow all school rules and ask your coordinator for help if you are struggling.
- ✪ Getting along with your host family is very important in making your experience as an international student a valuable and exciting one. When you arrive, bring a small gift for your host family. While you are living with the family, make sure that you follow their customs and house rules. Be respectful and try to understand the culture of the family and country. Ask a question when you are not sure what is expected of you.
- ✪ Be Safe! Become familiar with your neighborhood. Learn about your new community and the culture and how to get around.
- ✪ Be adaptable to your new surroundings. It's up to you to adapt to changes and try to accept new things. Remember when something seems difficult for you, "It's not better or worse; it's just different."

Program Rules for Educatius Students

1) All students must follow the household rules of the Host Family with which they reside.
2) Students are responsible for providing meals for themselves if they choose to eat outside the host home. This includes school lunches, outings with friends, and similar situations.
3) Educatius has a zero-tolerance policy for any use of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances and misuse of legal substances in order to achieve intoxication. Students may not buy, sell, possess or use any form of narcotic, alcoholic beverage or controlled substance (unless prescribed by a medical doctor and disclosed previously to Educatius). Students are not allowed to use any legal substance in a way that is meant to achieve intoxication, including but not limited to inhalable intoxicants. This restriction also

includes the possession of any drug paraphernalia. Students found to be violating this rule will be dismissed from the Educatius International program immediately.

4) Educatius International does not allow students to smoke tobacco cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or to use any form of tobacco while participating in the Program.
5) Students on the Educatius International Program are not permitted to hitchhike under any circumstances.
6) Students may not make any life-changing decisions while on the program. This includes marriage, changing religion, body piercing and tattoos.
7) Students are not allowed to participate in any sexual contact and other like activities, including but not limited to, sexting, while in the Program.
8) **All international travel** by the student while on the Educatius program must be approved by Educatius International through submission and approval of a Student Independent Travel Request form. **All overnight domestic travel apart from Host Family or Natural Family** must be approved by Educatius International through submission and approval of a Student Independent Travel Request form. The form should be submitted not less than 14 days prior to the proposed trip. The student must have listed on the form the supervising adult for the duration of the travel and his/her contact information. That adult must be 25 years old or older. The student must receive written approval via the required form from the Natural Family, the Host Family, International Coordinator, and Educatius. Additionally, if the travel will involve absence from school, the school must also approve. Students must not purchase tickets or pay other nonrefundable fees prior to official approval from Educatius. Educatius International will not be responsible for funds lost by students that do not adhere to this process.
9) Students have the ability to travel and receive visits as long as it does not interfere with academics and school attendance. The Host Family is **not** responsible for handling any travel arrangements for the student or the student's visitors. Visitors must find a hotel/ motel or other accommodations apart from the Host Family home. The student must coordinate with the Host Family and make sure the Host Family knows the student's location and contact information while the student is traveling or staying with visitors at a location other than the Host Family home.
10) Students must obey the rules and regulations of the high school which they attend. Attendance at school is mandatory. The only exceptions are if the student is ill or has been approved for travel under Program Rule 8. Students are required to enroll in a full course load which includes English. Students are to maintain a minimum of a "C" average (or equivalent if the school uses a non-letter grading system) in each class. Failure to do so, and/or repeated complaints from the school regarding poor attitude or behavior, are grounds for immediate dismissal from the Educatius International

Program.

11) The Natural Family and the student must be prepared to accept the Host Family that has been screened and approved by Educatius International Staff. The U.S. is very diverse, and there could be many scenarios.
12) All students are required to participate in the insurance policy provided by Educatius International. Students have the option to purchase additional insurance at their own expense, if desired.
13) Students are prohibited from accepting any form of work or labor in accordance with the rules for the F-1 visa.
14) Students are only permitted to drive motor vehicles during an accredited driver's education class and only in an authorized driver's education vehicle. Students are, under no circumstances, allowed to drive any other vehicles, including, but not limited to, the Host Family vehicle. Students are not allowed to purchase or possess any motor vehicle in the U.S.
15) While in the U.S., international students are subject to all local, state, and federal laws. Violation of U.S. law can be grounds for dismissal from the Educatius International Program.
16) Students must follow all rules and decisions made by Educatius International. Educatius reserves the right to terminate a student's Program should the student violate: the Program Rules; any other guidelines or Program materials issued by Educatius or its partners; any agreements made between Student, the Natural Family, and Educatius; or for other disciplinary reasons.

Computer Usage

The use of the host family computer should be considered a privilege. As with most privileges, there are guidelines and rules to follow. Educatius International supports the rules and guidelines schools and host families have for computer and internet use. In addition to school and host family rules and guidelines, Educatius International asks that students adhere to the following:

1. Host families may set rules with time limits regarding telephone and internet usage in the host family's home. Students must adhere to these rules. We recommend that limits be set immediately after the students' arrival. If the host family feels it necessary, they may turn off the internet at any time.
2. Internet subject matter may be limited according to host family guidelines.
3. **Pornography is not permitted**. Students are subject to immediate disciplinary action if

pornographic material has been downloaded, searched for, or viewed on the computer.

4. Adding, deleting or altering computer programs can be done by permission only. If the student wishes to build a website, the subject matter chosen for the website should be pre-approved by the host family and discussed with an Educatius International representative.
5. Computer and printer supplies used by the student may need to be supplied by the student. Students and their host family should discuss this issue before use of the host family computer or printer starts.
6. While on school property, school rules and guidelines regarding computer and internet use must be followed.
7. The use of a computer and the internet on any property in the US should be by permission only and Educatius International rules must be honored.

Sexual Abuse or Molestation

While sexual abuse is not a common occurrence in the experience of international students, Educatius would like all students to be informed about how to recognize and respond to this behavior should they encounter it.

Sexual abuse or molestation is defined as the forcing of unwanted sexual activity by one person on another. This could include any unwanted physical touching of a sexual nature, being forced to look at pornography, or any type of sexual behavior that makes an individual feel uncomfortable.

How should you respond to unwanted and inappropriate advances?

- **Listen to your feelings –** If someone tries to touch you or behave sexually toward you in any manner that makes you uncomfortable, pay attention to those feelings and act on them.
- **Say 'Stop' or 'No' firmly and loudly –** If you are feeling threatened by someone giving you inappropriate and unwanted attention, do not worry about being polite. Your safety is more important than whether or not the other person will be embarrassed.
- **Remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible –** Always be sure to carry your cell phone with you. If you feel you are in immediate danger call 911. If you do not feel you are in immediate danger but need someone to pick you up in order to get out of the situation, call your host parent or IC. Make sure these numbers are stored in your phone.

- **Tell a trusted adult –** Talk to your host parent or Educatius IC about any situation of this type. Don't be afraid that you might get someone in trouble. It is important to protect yourself. Also, you could be protecting other teenagers from harm if you expose a potential threat.
- **Contact Educatius –** Even if you talk to your host parent or other adult about unwanted advances toward you, please always let your Educatius coordinator know as well. If you cannot reach your IC or do not feel comfortable talking to your IC for some reason, please call your Regional Manager. You can also always reach someone on the 24 hour emergency number 800-301-6014. Your Educatius representative will be required to report any suspected or alleged abuse to the National Office for appropriate follow up. Educatius is responsible for your welfare while you are on program and will do everything possible to make sure you are safe.

Insurance

United Healthcare
1-800-251-1712
www.esecutive.com/urgentcare

Once you arrive in the United States, you will attend an orientation with your Coordinator or Educatius Staff. You will be given a page with your insurance information or you can ask your host family to print it from your student profile for you. It is important to carry your insurance page with you at all times.

You will have not have to pay a copay when you see the doctor, but there is a $350 charge for an emergency room visit.

United Healthcare will assist you with:

1. Referral to United Healthcare network (a doctor or clinic in your insurance network)
2. Emergency Travel Assistance
3. Lost luggage reimbursement

Please let your host family know if you feel ill and would like to see a doctor. If you get injured at any point in your program, you must also notify your coordinator as soon as possible.

You may be required to get a "sports physical" prior to participating in any school athletics. Your insurance **will not** cover this physical. You must have it at your own expense when you

arrive and before you can practice. Insurance will also not cover any immunizations that you may need after you arrive.

Important Phone Numbers

My Host Family _____

My Coordinator _____

My Regional Manager _____

Educatius 24 hour toll free number 1-**800-301-6014**
Life threatening emergencies while in the US **911**