



HOSTING A CHINESE STUDENT

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HOSTING A CHINESE STUDENT

Hosting a Chinese student can be a most rewarding experience – an opportunity to extend your family into a second culture. Chinese students provide us the opportunity to look at familiar patterns through the eyes of those who grew up in a different country, speak a different language, and have different habits and expectations. Some of these differences may be hardly noticeable, while others may be surprising. Recognizing cultural differences, respecting them, and being able to accommodate them for the duration of the stay will broaden everyone's intercultural perspectives. The following information is a point of departure for conversations at home and discussions in the classroom, raising sensitivity and expanding awareness about how your student will participate in your family's daily life. It will also help anticipate awkward moments and perhaps prevent difficult situations.

I. Chinese Students Have Expectations of the United States

Chinese students probably have expectations of life in the United States formed during the English-language learning experience in the Chinese classroom or from the media. Most Chinese have seen popular American movies and television series, and most likely their expectations have been shaped by these Hollywood images. As you well know, few families will match the image portrayed in school texts or movies. To get an idea of how this works, describe your image of *China* and see how your guest reacts.

Visitors will be eager to experience the United States. They will expect to encounter the stereotypes they may have formed, but they should also be open to dismantling them. Many have very specific images of what the U.S. is and how it operates. They know that school buses are yellow. They know about freeways, Los Angeles traffic jams, and probably a lot about New York.

Expectations may be idealistic, even unrealistic, and their requirements of their host families may be based on these expectations. Chinese may have unrealistic ideas about the distances in the United States. When asked about what they would like to see or do, they may suggest something so far away that you are not at all prepared to accommodate that wish or at least surprised by such an excessive request.

II. Meeting Your Student at the Airport

Meeting the Chinese at the airport is a moment filled with anticipation and feelings ranging from "Why are we doing this?" to "This is going to be so much fun. I can't wait." Conversation tends to focus on the trip, the airline connections, and the guests' travel fatigue. This is also an apprehensive moment for the visitors, who suddenly find themselves all alone with total strangers with whom they will live for the next four weeks.

III. Arriving at Home

When the Chinese arrive, they have spent many hours on the plane, and have a time change to overcome. They will be excited about this trip! The sights, sounds, and new language provide a barrage of impressions in the beginning. Much of the information you give during the first hours will be lost in the initial confusion.

When you first arrive at home, introduce your student to family members and pets. Determine immediately how you would like your student to address you. Do you want it to be by first name? Mom and Dad? Mr. and Mrs.? Show your guest where s/he will sleep and where to put his/her things, then tour the house, pointing out where important things are located, especially which bathroom to use and how to operate the tub or shower. Although it is important for your guest to know how appliances operate, this might be reserved for another time, when some of the excitement has settled and he/she will be more receptive to details such as how the microwave operates and which TV channels are more interesting than others.

IV. Meals

Even if it is not common for your family to eat three meals a day, provide this opportunity to your guest. Treat your guest as you would your own children. Are you planning to have family dinners at certain times on certain days? If you want your guest to be there, make it clear when you expect him/her. Certain foods considered to be typically American and liked by most students may take some time to "grow" on your visitor. What are your thoughts about snacking? What is off limits? What is available? Is the refrigerator available for between-meal snacks? Are there limitations? Please make this clear to your student.

V. Daily Routines

Don't change your family's patterns to present the "typical" American family picture. If you do not normally eat breakfast together, don't start now. If there are times when everyone just goes to the refrigerator and helps him/herself, continue to do that and invite your guest to participate. If you do laundry on certain days, tell your visitor when and where to put clothes to be washed. If you go to church on Sundays, invite your visitor to come along. If you do not normally go, don't go for your visitor's sake, but do make it possible for him/her to go to church if desired.

Discuss the daily routines. What time is "rise and shine"? Is the bathroom to be shared? Do they know where to get on and off the school bus, and how to walk home from there? Are you expecting your guest to participate in certain chores? Make his/her bed? Be ready to leave at a certain time? Is TV accessible at all times? Who sits where in front of the TV? What time do you expect everyone to be quiet for the night? It is a common Chinese habit to keep doors closed. When your guest retreats into his/her room and closes the door, it does not mean that s/he is closing him/herself off from you, it just means that this is what is typically done at home in China. Also be sensitive to the student's need for privacy and quiet time. When in doubt about how your guest is feeling, ask!

VI. Telephone and Email Use

What are your expectations regarding telephone use? It would be nice to let your students make a short call home to let their families know that they have arrived safely. Telephone calls home can often lead to homesickness. Discourage your guest from excessively calling their family and friends in China. After that, what are your rules about long-distance calls? Time on the phone? Calls after certain hours? Telephone calls are also not as important anymore now that most families have email and Skype. Students should be given a chance to email their friends and families. Discourage hour-long sessions on the computer, as that prevents the students from being with their host families and fellow students.

VII. Laundry

What are your household procedures regarding laundry? Does everyone do his/her own? Should dirty clothing be in a certain place on a certain day? Who does the ironing? How will you know whether the clothes brought by your guest are appropriate for the washing machine? Chinese typically wear the same article of clothing more often between washings than their American counterparts.

VIII. Necessary Information for Your Guest

Provide your guest with the home, work, and cellular numbers of family members or neighbors. Make certain that these numbers are written down and carried along with your address and directions from school to your house. It will be difficult for the Chinese to orient themselves in the beginning, since the distinguishing features with which we identify our neighborhoods will be unfamiliar and difficult to remember for them. Make sure your guest has access into the house at all times. If you have a security alarm, make sure the guest understands how it works, or leave it unarmed for the duration of the stay. Find out who has medical treatment authority for your guests. If it is the Chinese accompanying teacher, know how to reach him/her in case of an emergency.

IX. Activities with Chinese Students

Everything will be interesting to the Chinese, even if they do not show the appropriate enthusiasm. For many students, showing excitement about an experience is difficult. Some students may bubble with excitement, while others seem to shrug things off which you expect to be appreciated.

Regard seeming indifference as a cultural variation. It is often interesting to observe how Chinese guests react to a situation without apparent interest and then listen to them talk about it with great excitement to the other Chinese students at school the following day. It may well be that some of the experiences your guest has while with you may not be understood until s/he returns home.

Everyday life is also interesting. Grocery shopping, running errands, visiting neighbors, doing family projects, attending little league ball games, spending a day at work with someone from your family, taking a trip to the hardware store, etc., will be valuable experiences for your guest and will afford a detailed look into American life.

Regard your guest as a typical student. Your invitation to accompany you may not be met with excitement. S/he may prefer to relax in front of the TV. While some relaxing may be appropriate, those opportunities ought to be balanced with worthwhile activities.

X. What Do We Talk About?

Ask your student about his/her family, habits, food, work, etc. This discussion will give you significant information and will let you know where the cultural differences lie and what may be of interest to your student.

Expect your Chinese student to be more politically informed than many Americans. A Chinese student typically has a global view and may not agree with the American way of doing things in the world. Do not try to convert him/her. Try to explain the reasons for your thinking and discover the reasons for your guest's thinking.

XI. Host Family's Financial Obligations

Treat your guest as you treat your own children. When you go out for meals or to an event, pay for your Chinese student as you would your own children. Chinese students will have spending money of their own for souvenirs and snacks.

XII. What If Things Just Don't Work Out?

Even though the Chinese students are screened prior to being accepted into the program, and even though care has been taken to match your family with the student according to what is known about each student, it occasionally happens that people simply were not meant to be together under the same roof. It could be that the students do not get along, or it could be that the Chinese student is fundamentally so different that you are dreading the days he/she will be with you. If that should be the case, call your son's or daughter's Principal and ask for assistance. Sometimes all it takes is a conversation to clear up differences. Sometimes it would simply be better for a student to be moved to a different home. This does not imply that you are a poor host or that you should tough it out. It may simply mean that this is an incompatible match.

XIII. You Can Do It!

Have fun with the visit! This is an opportunity for you and your family to learn firsthand about another culture. In fact, you may find that you have begun a long-lasting international friendship. Hope that your son/daughter will have the opportunity to return the visit and gain as much from the visit as your guest gained from being with you. There will probably be some awkward moments, but those will pass. When in doubt, ask, and keep the dialogue going. You'll be surprised how quickly the time passes.



Traverse City Area Public Schools Volunteer Program

A volunteer is a person who visits a building on a regular basis (more than one occasion). Please be sure the appropriate paperwork for each given scenario is complete and submitted to TCAPS Volunteer Coordinator at 231-933-5654 or hertelka@tcaps.net.

SCHOOL-BASED VOLUNTEERS

- School-Based Volunteer Information Form
- Standards of Conduct

DRIVER

- School-Based Volunteer Information Form
- Standards of Conduct
- Driver Clearance Form

OVERNIGHT CHAPERONE or HOST FAMILY/ EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

- School-Based Volunteer Information Form
- Standards of Conduct
- DHS clearance

EARLY CHILDHOOD, PRESCHOOL, EXTENDED DAY OR SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP

- School-Based Volunteer Information Form
- Standards of Conduct
- DHS clearance
- Staff screening statement
- Medical clearance
- TB test

DHS Clearance Instructions – Allows a State of Michigan check of any substantiated child abuse or neglect history. You must apply in person to DHS at 701 S. Elmwood Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. Bring your driver's license with you. Clearance is processed while you wait. If you need to contact them, the phone number is 941-3900.

TB Test Instructions – TB tests within 1 year prior are acceptable. The TB test and Medical Clearance are on the same form. TB test may be provided by your own doctor by GT Health Department at 922-4831.



TCAPS School-Based Volunteer Information

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

1. Legal Name _____ Today's Date _____

Address _____
Number/Street City/State Zip Code

Email Address _____

I give formal consent to receive electronic communication from TCAPS. TCAPS will not sell or share your information to third parties.

Phone Number(s) _____

Sex: Male Female Date of Birth _____

2. Educational Background _____

3. Place of Current Employment _____ Phone _____

4. The following is requested to comply with statistical reports required by state and federal offices. It is requested only to assist the school district in responding accurately with statistical information in regard to racial/ethnic numbers and percentages of the total TCAPS staff. The racial/ethnic headings below are taken directly from the form provided by the equal opportunity commission for public school systems. Please place an "X" in the racial/ethnic-heading box that is appropriate to your racial/ethnic heritage. Ethnicity (mark one only):

- White (not Hispanic origin) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Black or African American Multiracial** (If you check this box, please mark % near boxes to the left)
- Asian American

5. School where you would like to volunteer: _____ Grade Level _____

6. Please list days of the week and hours of the day that you are available _____

7. Please list a personal reference that has known you for at least two years.

Name _____ Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

If you have not lived in Michigan for more than 3 years, what state(s) did you live in during that time?

Have you ever been convicted of, pled guilty or nolo contendere (neither admitting nor denying the charge) to, or received a suspended imposition of sentence, been placed on probation, or otherwise been found guilty of:

Any criminal or municipal ordinance violation? ___ Yes ___ No DUI/DWI ___ Yes ___ No

Have there ever been allegations, complaints, or reports regarding your involvement in child abuse or neglect (regardless of whether the incident was confirmed or denied)? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes to any of the above, please provide date, description, and explanation of each incident on additional paper.

You have my permission to contact my employer. I understand that any omissions or misstatements made by me on this application form may be cause for my application to be declined or volunteer placement to be terminated. I understand that a Michigan state Police criminal background check will be conducted and all information including conviction or child abuse records will be verified, and hereby consent to such verification. I declare that all the statements I have made on this application are true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand TCAPS, in their sole and complete discretion, may accept or decline this application without providing me any reasons for the decision.

Signature _____ Date _____

TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DRIVER/OWNER INFORMATION FORM
FIELD TRIPS USING NON-DISTRICT OWNED OR OPERATED VEHICLES

Driver Information Section:

I certify that as a driver of a private vehicle transporting students to a school sponsored function:

- A. I am at least eighteen (18) years old and have been a fully licensed driver for a period of at least one (1) calendar year.
- B. I currently possess a valid driver's license that does not have any legal restriction, limitation, or suspension associated or attached to it.
- C. I possess insurance coverage on the vehicle that I will be driving, including liability coverage in the amount of at least equal to the minimum required by the State of Michigan.

Insurance Company Name: _____

Driver's License Number: _____

License Number of Vehicle: _____

- D. Please list all vehicle moving violations, or other vehicle infractions in the past five (5) years.

- E. I am not aware of any mechanical defect or problem with the vehicle that might make it unsafe for purposes of this trip.
- F. I agree to transport no more than the number of persons for which the vehicle is designed and insurance rated.
- G. I will make sure that all passengers utilize the available safety restraining system. I will transport only approved passengers.
- H. I will make sure that children under the age of thirteen (13) will ride properly belted in the rear passenger area only.
- I. I will make sure that all adult passengers are properly belted.
- J. I understand that I am in charge of this vehicle. I will see to it that no occupant consumes tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or illegal substances in or around this vehicle. I will see to it that no occupant possesses a weapon or firearm.
- K. This is a school-sponsored field trip. By signing this form I agree to abide by TCAPS Student/Parent Handbook expectations.

SIGNATURE OF DRIVER: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS OF DRIVER: _____

Vehicle Owner Authorization Section:

I am the owner of the vehicle (make, model, and year): _____ with _____ number of seat belt positions in the rear passenger area.

If someone other than the vehicle owner is driving, please complete:

I hereby authorize the following named individual, _____, to drive said vehicle, utilizing appropriate safety restraining systems, and adhering to manufacturer established passenger capacity limits.

I certify that I have read, understand, and completed the requested information from the "Driver Information" and the "Vehicle Owner Authorization" sections of this document.

Signature of Vehicle Owner: _____ **Date:** _____

Address of Vehicle Owner: _____

I have reviewed the information provided above.

Signature of Principal _____ **Date:** _____

TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR DRIVERS
FIELD TRIP USING NON-DISTRICT OWNED OR OPERATED VEHICLES

Upon occurrence of an off-campus emergency, school personnel will take the following steps:

- A. Check the scene to make sure it is not dangerous before administering first aid.
- B. Assist in identifying students requiring first aid.
- C. Contact 9-1-1.
- D. Contact principal with information.
- E. If necessary to stay with injured individual, assign supervisory responsibilities to alternate accompanying chaperone.
- F. Complete an Incident/Accident Report upon return to the school.

If overnight housing is needed, take the following steps:

- A. Contact principal.
- B. Assign staff to assist with contacting all parents of students.
- C. Notify 9-1-1 and explore possible emergency transportation home for students.
- D. House students in the warmest, safest areas of the building.
- E. Keep accurate records of students who are picked up, by whom, at what time using check-out procedure in the school office.
- F. Provide food for students and staff.

PHONE NUMBERS:

Central Dispatch:	9-1-1
Superintendent	933-1725
Director of Operations (Transportation)	933-1960 _____ home
Director of Operations (Maintenance)	933-1950 _____ home
Principal (home)	_____
Secretary (home)	_____