

# International Parent/Student Handbook



**INSPIRED LEARNING.  
MASTERFUL TEACHING.**

THE COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL

21 Broadmoor Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Telephone (719) 475-9747 | [www.css.org](http://www.css.org)



Please note that this document serves as an addition to the CSS Student / Parent Handbook and clarifies policies and procedures relevant to the international student and homestay experience. All CSS policies outlined in the CSS Student / Parent Handbook apply to international students, their families and Host Families.

**SCHOOL MISSION:** Through superior academics and mentoring, The Colorado Springs School prepares students to think independently and to meet the needs of a dynamic world with leadership, ingenuity, problem-solving skills, and personal integrity.

## Table of Contents

<b>CAMPUS CONTACTS</b>	<b>4</b>
The Role of the International Student and Homestay Coordinator	4
<b>HOMESTAY STIPEND</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXPECTATIONS OF HOME ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
Agreement Between The Colorado Springs School and Hosts	5
Food Provisions	5
Home Insurance	6
Risk and Liability	6
Abiding by the Law	7
Internet Provision	7
Household Chores	7
Family Life	8
Providing a Comfortable Home Away from Home	9
Religion	10
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>10</b>
Arrival and Departure	10
Motor Vehicles	11
Acquiring a Driver's License	12
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>13</b>
Independent Student Travel During the School Year	13
Student Travel with Host Family	13
Request a Respite from Host Duties and Responsibilities	14
<b>MEDICAL MATTERS</b>	<b>15</b>
Permission to Treat	15
Medical Appointments and Benefits	15

Medical Insurance	15
Financial Responsibility	15
<b>PERSONAL FINANCES</b>	<b>16</b>
Expectations of Responsibility for Payment	16
Opening a Student Bank Account	16
Student Employment	17
<b>COMMUNICATION TO HOME COUNTRY</b>	<b>17</b>
Methods of Communication	17
Cell Phones	17
International Phone Calls – Messaging Apps	18
<b>ACADEMIC SUPPORT</b>	<b>18</b>
Communication from CSS	18
Student/Teacher Communication	18
Parent/Teacher Communication	19
School Information Nights	19
English Language Tutoring	19
<b>PARENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>20</b>
Host a Student Gathering	20
Recruitment of Future Host Families	20

## **CAMPUS CONTACTS**

Ann Pettit  
Director of Student Programs  
apettit@css.org  
(719) 434-3572

Sam Gaudet  
Associate Head of School  
sgaudet@css.org  
(719) 434-3550

### **The Role of the International Student and Homestay Coordinator**

The Director of Student Programs serves as the International Student and Homestay Coordinator. The Coordinator serves as the primary liaison between international students, homestay families, birth families, and the Colorado Springs School (CSS), including its faculty, admission representatives, administrators, counselors, and contractors. The Coordinator maintains all aspects of an international student's non-academic records: medical insurance enrollment and claims, waivers of parental consent, social contracts, and business office administration. The Coordinator also advises international students on academic affairs and, in partnership with the school Registrar, requests and maintains documentation required by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) division of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The International Student and Homestay Coordinator conducts visits to homestay family homes once per academic year. The primary intent of the home visit is to establish personal contact with members of the host family. Secondly, the International Student and Homestay Coordinator must visually confirm that living conditions are indeed as reported and risk is limited. Home visits are scheduled in the spring of each year. In addition, the International Student and Homestay Coordinator makes monthly contact during the academic year with each international student and host family. Contact may be made in person, over the telephone, or via email.

The International Student and Homestay Coordinator is the first point of contact for homestay families. The Coordinator is to be informed of academic or behavioral concerns, issues of student well-being, intent to travel, and medical response. In addition, the Coordinator is a resource to homestay families as they navigate the role of surrogate for a minor. Finally, the Coordinator will check in with host families on a

regular basis, including at mid-semester and mid-year, to discuss academic outcomes and address any successes or challenges that may have arisen.

## HOMESTAY STIPEND

Host families are compensated with a monthly stipend. The stipend is intended to offset the expense of supporting an additional child in the family's home. Stipend checks are distributed over the course of the 10-month academic year, beginning in August and terminating with the May check. Hosts of students affiliated with Faces & Our Cultures receive one stipend check in November and another in December to cover the 8-week program. Checks are cut on the Wednesday *closest to* the 15th of each month. They are then sent through USPS. Currently, mail processing for Colorado Springs is done within the Denver distribution center before the mail is reassigned to Colorado Springs for delivery; consequently, host families should expect to receive checks during the third week of each month. Should a family wish to receive checks in a more timely fashion, the CSS Business Office can terminate mail delivery and instead prepare the check for the family to pick up at school. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator can be contacted to take advantage of this option.

## EXPECTATIONS OF HOME ENVIRONMENT

### Agreement Between The Colorado Springs School and Hosts

All residents of the home age 18 and older must consent to a background check. Hosts will notify the International Student and Homestay Coordinator of any changes to the family's situation transpiring from the time the original Host Family Application was submitted, and during the hosting period. Such changes include, but are not limited to, additional students or family members residing in the home, change in marital/relationship status, medical or family relationship issues, dwelling and student accommodations, family preferences, and transportation arrangements.<sup>1</sup>

### Food Provisions

CSS asks that host families model and encourage proper hydration and balanced nutrition. Host families are expected to provide a *minimum* of two well-rounded meals per day for a homestay student, including breakfast/brunch and dinner. Families may

---

<sup>1</sup> "Homestay Host Agreement." *YRDSB Homestay Services*. York Region District School Board, 2014. Web. 26 Oct. 2015.

prepare daily lunches for the student or provide the ingredients necessary for the student to make his/her own lunch, or the student may purchase lunch at CSS at his/her own expense. The cost of purchasing lunch at school is directly withdrawn from the student's incidental account that is managed by the CSS Business Office. Host families are also asked to maintain a well-stocked pantry and refrigerator with ready-made, nutritional snacks for grazing periods. Several specialty food markets serve Colorado Springs and are excellent sources for the creature comforts that a student may miss from her/his native country.

### Home Insurance

Host families are required to have homeowner's insurance coverage and must carry an umbrella policy that includes coverage for an additional resident. Though typical homeowner's coverage ranges from \$300,000-\$500,000, CSS requires that host family homeowner's policies cover a *minimum* of one million dollars. The homestay stipend may be used to offset any small increase in insurance cost that results from the one million dollar requirement. Host families must provide proof of coverage to the International Student and Homestay Coordinator annually by August 15. It is advised that host families discuss and verify a student's valuables at the time of move-in; this information will be helpful in the extreme event that an insurance claim need be filed.

### Risk and Liability

Students need to have ready access to adult supervision at all times they are not involved in school programming. Upper school-age students may be left alone at home during daytime hours but are not to be left overnight.

Recreational facilities and equipment in the home and on the property can present high risk for injury, trauma, and even, in the most severe circumstances, death. This includes but is not limited to swimming pools, large trampolines, utility four wheelers and all-terrain vehicles, and weapons. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator must be notified of the presence of any such facility or equipment.

In some circumstances, an international student's birth parents will not provide consent for the child to participate in hazardous or high-risk sports or activities, and this wish must be respected. In addition, some insurance providers will not cover any type of activity taken to be considered "extreme". The International Student and Homestay Coordinator will provide homestay families with a list of approved/restricted activities to the fullest extent known.

### **Abiding by the Law**

Individuals coming to the United States on an F-1 visa are required to abide by all domestic laws. It is possible that an international student's cultural norms will conflict with local, state, or national laws, so it is important that host families work in partnership with CSS to ensure that students have been properly informed of proper conduct in the United States. Host parents should never hesitate to guide a conversation about any law that seems important at the time. Students also should be encouraged to ask for clarification of laws as needed.

The use of alcohol, drugs, or smoking materials is illegal for minors and violates school rules. Use or abuse of any such substance by an international exchange student will most likely result in immediate dismissal from school and the student's return to his/her home nation. All expenses will be the responsibility of the biological family. Please report any concerns regarding substance abuse to the International Student and Homestay Coordinator.

### **Internet Provision**

With the exciting integration of the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program at the CSS Upper School, students are required to bring a computing device to and from school daily. This device must meet a specific set of criteria detailed in the [CSS BYOD Handbook](#). Teachers increasingly give world wide web-based assignments; as a result, students must have the ability to easily access the internet at home.

### **Household Chores**

CSS encourages each host family to introduce its student to household chores and rules and to hold the student accountable for meeting expectations. However, the majority of international students will be unaccustomed to demonstrating personal responsibility in the home. It is recommended that the entire family engage in a formal conversation within a homestay student's first few days to clarify roles and responsibilities, communication methods, and consequences. It will take time for the student to feel comfortable with her/his ability to meet the family's expectations and to contribute to the upkeep of a home. Regular feedback and positive modeling by the host parents will increase the student's fluency in American social norms and, ultimately, help her/him feel safe in being an active family participant. A partnership between international student and host sibling may enhance the quality of chore completion.

## Family Life

Family rules, including for socializing and dating, should be discussed early on. Friendships and matters of the heart are not ours to control but sensitive guidance and the same oversight a host parent would provide for her/his own child are appropriate for a homestay student. Dating or any act of physical intimacy between a homestay student and a host sibling is a violation of the international student program and will result in disciplinary action and removal of the student from the home.

Knowing the homestay student's whereabouts, with whom the student is, what the plan is, and a mutually agreed-upon curfew is always expected. In particular, it is especially important that host parents know of any student drivers who may transport an international student and whether the student driver is in violation of Colorado DMV rules. It is possible that the hosts' standards and regulations differ from those of the student's natural parents; please engage in open and honest communication with the biological parents and the International Student and Homestay Coordinator if there are concerns about the student receiving inconsistent messages.

International students enrolled at CSS have proactively sought out an American educational experience and immersion in American family life. Host families are expected to include and integrate homestay students into family events and activities as if s/he has always been part of the family's norm. Obviously, it will take time to develop authentic relationships between family members and a new addition, and an international student joining a new home life must cope with the temporary feeling of being a stranger in the home. Furthermore, during the student's first weeks and months in Colorado Springs, s/he will be adjusting to altitude and climate, new norms related to personal hygiene, and foods that differ significantly from his/her own culture. Consistent warmth, care, and sensitivity will nurture comfortable living patterns for everyone in the household.

Most adolescents crave and benefit from an increased amount of privacy as they transition towards adulthood. Sporadic withdrawal from family socializing is a normal element of human development at these ages. A homestay student should be regularly encouraged to join social activities but is entitled to exercise discretion regarding her/his own participation. Should you be concerned about a student's overall happiness or well-being, please contact the International Student and Homestay Coordinator.



It is CSS's goal that each homestay family embraces its international student(s) as their own. Accordingly, a student should feel welcome in and encouraged to frequent the shared spaces used by other members of the family, such as the kitchen, living room, and family room.

### **Providing a Comfortable Home Away from Home**

All homestay students must be provided a bedroom that contains adequate closet and dresser space for personal belongings. This space typically becomes a refuge or safe haven for a student who is living apart from his/her natural family. Consequently, host families are encouraged to make this a comfortable space for the student: paint or decorate the room in the student's favorite color(s), provide a comfortable seating option for Skype or telephone calls with the student's biological family, and accommodate the student's bedding preferences. The host family will supply a bed, pillow and bed linens that are adequate for warmth, and a set of towels.

It is permissible for most students to share a room with a peer in the family so long as both students are of the same gender and approximate age, and each has his/her own bed. Students from China, however, must be provided a private bedroom. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator must be notified of and approve a shared-room arrangement.

Bathrooms may be shared as necessary. There should be clear expectations and communication concerning who can shower/bathe when and for how long. Showers should not be taken late in the evening if it disturbs the household. The host family will provide toilet paper and hand soap but the student can be asked to supply his/her own personal items such as bath soap, shampoo and conditioner, moisturizing cream, toothpaste, toothbrush, hair comb, and feminine products.

Study space is also important. It may be best to establish study space after the homestay student has had an opportunity to get his/her bearings in the home. Many host families designate a common space, such as the family room or dining room, where all students in the home study. This arrangement encourages academic conversations between homestay siblings, collaborative approaches to assigned work, and peer-to-peer tutorials. In addition, adults can make themselves readily available to answer questions or review student work when study space is centrally located in the home. Should it be decided that the homestay student will study in his/her bedroom or another private space, host parents are encouraged to check in on the student's homework progress

periodically during each study session. Consistent monitoring of the student's work pace will keep the student accountable and minimize distractions that compete for the student's attention during study time.

## Religion

In the spirit of diversity and inclusion, host families are encouraged to introduce homestay students to important family practices and religious affiliation(s). However, a homestay student may not share the same religious views as his/her host family. A student can be invited to attend religious-based events with the family but cannot be required to attend. A student can determine for her/himself if s/he would like to experience this facet of U.S. culture. The student should never be made to feel bad for choosing not to participate. Allowing a student to continue to practice his/her own faith is thoughtful and important. Please consider that a homestay student may need transportation to key religious events.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Arrival and Departure

International students will travel to Colorado Springs by way of a round trip air ticket, as required by the U.S. State Department. International students are advised to arrive in Colorado Springs one day prior to The Colorado Springs School's annual ice cream social kick-off. The homestay student's travel itinerary will be shared with the host family *a minimum of* two weeks prior to arrival. At least one host parent is responsible for meeting the homestay student at the airport at the time of his/her arrival. Students travel with a form provided by the school that lists contact information for the following: homestay family, International Student and Homestay Coordinator, emergency contact, and natural family. The information on this form ensures seamless communication between all concerned parties for the duration of a student's travel.

Host obligations terminate on the day following commencement exercises. After this date, The Colorado Springs School relinquishes all responsibility and liability for international students. The host family assumes all responsibility and liability for its homestay student in the event that the student continues to reside with the family beyond the contract expiration date. However, host families are entitled to receive additional monthly stipend checks based on the duration of a student's stay into the summer months.

At least one host parent is responsible for driving the homestay student to the airport at the time of his/her departure. The host parent(s) is expected to adhere to general airport drop-off recommendations: two hours prior to a domestic flight and three hours prior to an international flight.

### Motor Vehicles

International homestay participants affiliated with the Colorado Springs School agree to abide by all state and local driving and curfew laws. The Driver's License Administration division of the Department of Motor Vehicles stipulates the following legal parameters for drivers who are minors.

Within the first six months of a driver receiving his/her license, only *biological* family members may be passengers in the car. This **excludes** homestay students from being a passenger in a vehicle that is driven by a newly-licensed driver. The only exception is if an adult passenger is in the vehicle, 21 years of age or older, who has a valid license and has held a driver's license for at least one year. It is not permissible for a student driver with a temporary permit to drive while an international student is in the vehicle, regardless of an adult presence.

Within months 6-12 of a driver receiving his/her license, *one* non-family member under 21 years old may be a passenger in the car. In the event that a host family has sponsored *two or more* international students, a newly-licensed driver cannot drive both or all students within this time period. The only exception is if an adult passenger is in the vehicle, 21 years of age or older, who has a valid license and has held a driver's license for at least one year.

A minor cannot drive between the hours of 12 midnight and 5:00 a.m. unless s/he has held a driver's license for at least one year, except in the following circumstances:

- An adult passenger, 21 years of age or older, is in the vehicle who has a valid license and has held a driver's license for at least one year
- The minor is driving to school or a school-authorized activity and the school doesn't provide transportation. A signed statement is needed from a school official showing the date of the activity
- The minor is driving because of employment; the driver must carry a signed statement from the employer verifying employment
- The minor is driving because of an emergency

After 12 months of possessing a driver's license, any number of non-biological family members may be passengers in the car.

The only exception to the above stipulations is court-approved legal guardianship by the host family or adoption.

A Permissions to Drive form must be submitted to CSS by an international student who wishes to ride as a passenger in another student's vehicle.

## Acquiring a Driver's License

It is an individual decision whether or not to obtain a driver's license. Students who want to obtain one are recommended to use a driver's education school. However, owning a car is not a simple matter, especially for a teenager, and a host family assumes significant risk and liability when offering one of its own vehicles to an international student for personal use.

Regardless, learning to drive is a rite of passage and is one of the most memorable educational experiences that a student will undertake. Plus, it exposes a student to extra freedom. Should a homestay student express strong interest in applying for a driver's license, please communicate this to the International Student and Homestay Coordinator. The Coordinator will serve as a liaison between the host family, school administrators, and U.S. Immigrations and Custom Enforcement, the division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that helps visa-holders obtain benefits such as a driver's license or state identification card.

Any student affiliated with Educatius International or PSE must follow the driving policy of the agency. Students acknowledge that they understand the policy when they sign the Student Orientation participant form at the beginning of the school year. Most commonly, the only automobile a student is allowed to drive is a certified driving instructor's vehicle. Students are at no time allowed to drive a host family's car, nor may they be added to the host family's insurance policy.

## TRAVEL

### **Independent Student Travel During the School Year**

On occasion, homestay students may wish to take a trip independent from the host family or a legal guardian. To do so, a “Permission to Travel” form must be requested from the International Student and Homestay Coordinator and completed in its entirety. The permission must be signed by the host parent(s) as well as the natural parent(s) and be approved by the International Student and Homestay Coordinator. This process serves to release both the host family and The Colorado Springs School from responsibility and liability during the host student’s independent travel.

The release form must be attached to a trip itinerary that details transportation mode(s), date(s) and time(s), location(s) of accommodations, proof of emergency funds, and contact information on location. In addition, if this trip entails missing school classes, the student must follow the protocol for a planned absence: upon collecting a “Planned Absence” form from the Registrar’s office, the student must get signed approval from current teachers, his/her advisor, the division lead, and the student’s biological parents, as detailed in Student and Parent Handbook.

Requests must be processed by the International Student and Homestay Coordinator at least two weeks in advance.

### **Student Travel with Host Family**

Including a homestay student on short trips and typical family outings is appropriate and part of the adventure. Day trips to popular Colorado destinations are encouraged in order to enrich the student’s immersion experience. Should a host family regularly overnight outside the home on weekends or during holidays -- this might include camping or traveling to a lake or mountain home -- we ask that the family be transparent about this with the student’s natural parents and the international student campus contacts at CSS. While it is not necessary to submit “Permission to Travel” requests for these types of regular excursions, we do ask that host families err on the side of communicating early and often with the International Student and Homestay Coordinator about recurring travel plans.

If a host family has a major trip planned and wishes to invite its homestay student, it is important to consult the student’s biological family to request their permission and discuss the anticipated costs. It is recommended that families get to know their

homestay student for a few weeks before making a decision about inviting the student on a major trip.

It is possible that, on occasion, a scheduled family trip will be deemed most appropriate for the immediate family only. Families need not feel awkward about traveling without the host student, especially for such events as weddings, overnight stays in a friend or relative's home, or when expensive flight costs may be incurred. Additionally, the international student may have school commitments that require him/her to remain in Colorado Springs during a family trip. In such circumstances, host parents must still act in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard, which means careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the homestay student's health, safety, and best interests.

### **Request a Respite from Host Duties and Responsibilities**

CSS can coordinate occasional short-term respites from hosting responsibilities to help host families meet the standard of care. Contact the International Student and Homestay Coordinator to request this type of arrangement. Please make any such requests as early as possible, but a minimum of two weeks in advance. One of two options may be filed when requesting a respite:

1. The name(s), address, email address, and phone number of a trusted individual or family with whom the hosts have personally arranged for the homestay student to reside with during the family absence. CSS requires that an individual be at least 25 years of age to assume responsibility for a host student.
2. The need for a substitute host arrangement to be coordinated by CSS for the dates of family travel. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator maintains a list of CSS families who cannot commit full-time to a student but enjoy hosting on a temporary basis. In these situations, the host family will pay the respite family a per diem fee to compensate the family for its time and the expenses that accrue when having a guest in the home.

The host family will be relieved of responsibility and liability during scheduled time away from the homestay student. This risk will be temporarily transferred to the chaperoning family.

## **MEDICAL MATTERS**

### **Permission to Treat**

All international students and natural families sign an authorization form to permit host parents to secure medical treatment in the event of student illness or injury and in the absence of the student's designated custodian. Should circumstances warrant, host parents agree to secure medical treatment for the student. The host(s) should contact the International Student and Homestay Coordinator when serious issues arise.

### **Medical Appointments and Benefits**

Homestay students generally arrive to Colorado Springs having completed the annual physical exam required as part of the school enrollment process and with an up-to-date record of required immunizations. Should an international student require medical, vision, or dental attention during the year, the host family may coordinate appointments on behalf of a student. Alternately, the International Student and Homestay Coordinator can schedule such appointments and, if so requested, provide transportation and adult supervision for the student at the time of the appointment. Please consult with the International Student and Homestay Coordinator for a student's medical insurance benefits.

### **Medical Insurance**

J-1 and F-1 student visa holders are required by law to have student accident insurance coverage. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator will coordinate insurance enrollment with each student's biological parents. Host parents will receive copies of the student's insurance card in addition to Medical Durable Power of Attorney and should store this documentation in a secure location that would be easy to access in the event of an emergency.

### **Financial Responsibility**

Upon signing an international student into a medical facility, medical personnel should be made aware of a family's status as "host" and not court-appointed Guardian. Host families do not incur costs nor bear personal financial responsibility for medical services rendered. A student's biological parents assume responsibility for medical expenses above and beyond that covered by insurance. Should a host parent need to front money for a student's medical appointment, receipts are to be shared with the International Student and Homestay Coordinator so that reimbursement can be arranged.

## PERSONAL FINANCES

### Expectations of Responsibility for Payment

It is important that host parents and their exchange student(s) develop a common understanding of the circumstances that warrant payment by whom. Host families are expected to be open and honest about their expectations for a student's use of personal funds. Most international students do not have easy access to cash reserves but it has become increasingly popular for exchange students to carry a credit card. In addition, each international student has funds available through an incidental account that is managed by the CSS Business Office. Account funds cover school-related expenses such as required supplies, tutor fees, lunches (if the student eats on campus), and Experience-Centered Seminar fees.

### Opening a Student Bank Account

Prior to a student's arrival in Colorado Springs, CSS advises that s/he allocate \$30-50 for spending money per week of the exchange experience, plus \$1000.00 for special purchases like gifts, ski trips, etc. However, international students are strongly discouraged from carrying or keeping large quantities of cash.

A student savings or checking account with an ATM card is recommended. UMB Bank provides these services for students. A host family can help by taking its student to the bank to open an account. A passport (personal identification) and a letter of authorization from the International Student and Homestay Coordinator are required. The bank will file an IRS Form W8-BEN in lieu of a social security number for identification on the account. The law does not require students to have a cosigner on a savings account; *do not cosign on a student account and do not ask to have a PIN for your student's account.*

CSS prefers that host families not lend money to a homestay student unless immediate reimbursement is guaranteed.

### Student Employment

Employment is not usually allowed on a student visa and international students' time is at a premium during their time at CSS. While students may enjoy earning small amounts



of pay from the occasional babysitting or lawn care job, homestay students are *not* “live-in help”.

## **COMMUNICATION TO HOME COUNTRY**

### **Methods of Communication**

The majority of CSS’s international students are quite experienced with technology. Like all children, exchange students desire and need regular communication with biological families. Host families should expect that a homestay student will want to maintain relationships with friends and extended family by way of email communication, cell phone contact, Skype, or messaging apps. Likewise, biological families look forward to receiving regular emails and texts with picture attachments so they know that their child is doing well here. However, please establish with an international student that bedtime is a time for rest and recovery. It is not a time for using devices to game or connect with family and friends. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator is able to intervene if a student’s behavior suggests insufficient sleep, and also to suggest strategies that might improve a student’s sleep habits.

### **Cell Phones**

It is most common for international students to utilize pay-as-you-go cell phones from AT&T or Verizon instead of committing to a two-year contract. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator can provide carrier options, or host parents may introduce the student to their preferred carrier and help initiate service. CSS recommends that a host family not add its homestay student to the family’s mobile plan, as this will protect the family from exceeding data coverage and accruing overage charges. The CSS technology policy states that students are not allowed to access the CSS wireless network with their phones. Please be mindful of this when guiding an international student through data plan options.

### **International Phone Calls – Messaging Apps**

It is recommended that host parents download a free messaging app (WeChat, WhatsApp, Messenger, etc.) that will allow international communication with the student and/or his/her biological family. In this day and age, there is little need for international coverage. However, it is convenient for host parents to be able to

communicate about issues related to the student even when s/he or members of the biological family are in their home country.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

### **Communication from CSS**

Hosts are expected to read and be familiar with the contents of the CSS Student and Parent Handbook. Please refer to the Communication section of the handbook for information about CSS publications and web access. The handbook can be found on the CSS website.

The school website is found at <http://www.css.org>. Descriptions of homework assignments are posted to the student's Google Classroom learning management portal. RenWeb is an electronic portal accessible through the website wherein parents and students can find calendar items, current news, electronic forms, family directory, records of academic progress and lunch account balance.<sup>2</sup> CSS reports student progress frequently, and student grades are readily available to students and parents via RenWeb. It is uncommon for the natural parents of an international student to have adequate English proficiency or internet accessibility to utilize RenWeb. Consequently, host parents are strongly encouraged to work in partnership with the International Student and Homestay Coordinator to monitor academic progress regularly and to provide parental support as needed. Host parents whose natural child(ren) attend(s) CSS may configure their RenWeb profile to also include a homestay student. Hosts whose affiliation to CSS does not extend beyond a homestay student will receive RenWeb login information from the International Student and Homestay Coordinator.

### **Student/Teacher Communication**

CSS promotes a culture of student self-advocacy. It is the responsibility of a student to contact teachers or the International Student and Homestay Coordinator with questions or concerns in order to devise strategies for improvement. When a pattern of unsatisfactory work occurs, the teacher, advisor, or International Student and Homestay Coordinator will notify host parents. Comprehensive grade reports are generated at the end of each semester.

---

<sup>2</sup> "Upper School Handbook 2015-2016." The Colorado Springs School. Updated July 2015. P. 8.

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Hosts are not responsible for the educational decisions made by an international student and/or natural parent(s) and any consequences resulting from the decisions. Hosts, however, should monitor student progress and attendance and should attend student/parent conferences at the school. Parent/teacher conferences are formally hosted midway through the first semester. Hosts should address any minor issues the student may have at the school with the International Student and Homestay Coordinator. Hosts should be readily available for contact from the school about routine matters regarding the student.<sup>3</sup>

### **School Information Nights**

Host parents need to attend important parent meetings scheduled by the school. These include but are not limited to the New Parent Meeting and Ice Cream Social, Academics in the Spotlight, and Experience-Centered Seminar Parent Meetings. Generally, teachers will communicate through the International Student and Homestay Coordinator for permission forms and waivers or if there is a major concern about student performance.

### **English Language Tutoring**

Some international students are required or encouraged to participate in tutoring for English language learning (ELL). Improvements made to English proficiency have direct correlation with academic success. The International Student and Homestay Coordinator will help the student connect with an appropriate tutor. Tutoring can often be arranged within the El Pomar Academic Center building during school hours, but evening in-home tutoring may also be possible.

---

<sup>3</sup> "Homestay Host Agreement." *YRDSB Homestay Services*. York Region District School Board, 2014. Web. 26 Oct. 2015.

## **PARENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Host a Student Gathering**

A host family is not alone in caring and providing for an international student. The collection of families who host CSS's international students become a community. Host parents are encouraged to offer student-centered play dates and activities for small groups of students or the entire international student and host sibling contingent. Involvement can include offering a home for the venue of an activity, preparing or sponsoring food, or providing transportation to a destination by filling a personal vehicle with students. The administration welcomes and appreciates this involvement.

### **Recruitment of Future Host Families**

Help the CSS International Student Program grow by speaking about and sharing the homestay experience with others. Host families can be featured in the Kodiak *Roar!* by writing about the influence of internationalism in the home. Prospective host families may complete the application process at any point during the year, which facilitates faster homestay placements in the spring and a broader network of families pre-vetted to host a student for a short-term stay. Contact the International Student and Homestay Coordinator for program and application details.