

Winter Schooling Program Q & A

1. What is the Winter Schooling Program?

This program is created for international students to experience the American schooling system, in the most hands-on way possible. One School partners with EDUUS, a Korean educational agency. International exchange Students attend classes, participate in activities, and do the work that is required of them during this time. Students also get to experience family life, after school and weekend culture, and American family values.

2. What is the Host Family responsible for?

Aside from basic housing and food necessities, transportation to and from the school is the responsibility of the host family. If there are unexpected conflicts or delays, please let OSOTA and EDUUS staff know. We encourage the host family to take the student with them on trips or other events, as this is also a great way for these children to experience American traditions and cultures. Host families are required to take the students to the school they are attending. Please do your best to make them feel welcome, but do not go out of your way to accommodate them. Also, if your student has a birthday during the program, any special thoughts would be appreciated, but do not feel pressured to make this an occasion. We will speak to the teachers to see if a small class celebration with cake and snacks can be planned.

Host families are to drop off students at the school by 8 AM and must pick up the students at 3:10 on a regular day or 5 PM (or after) due to afterschool tutoring twice a week. If you cannot do this, the host family must make other transportation arrangements for the student.

Due to field trips, host families must drop off and pick up the students at the school after the field trip is over. Host families are to provide snacks for the students as well. Korean staff members will be with the students and provide lunch for those days. Schedule will be given after you sign up.

3. What is the student responsible for?

The student is responsible for doing his/her homework and other assignments. Though the material is not graded, all students should sit down for homework time and try their best. The student should also be willing to help out around the house, i.e.: cleaning the table after a meal, helping with dishes, cleaning their rooms.

The student is responsible for his/her own toiletries, clothing, and school supplies. Personal purchases will be paid for by the student's allowance; there is no need to give them money. If there is an instance where students forget to bring their allowance (to the store, or the mall), and you provide them allowance, you will be reimbursed by the family.

Please note: It is most efficient and simple for you to remind students to bring their allowance when going to such places! If the student brought a phone with them please let us know.

Students are not allowed to use their phones in their host family's home. However, they are allowed to bring and use their phones during the field trips on Saturdays with the Korean Staff.

4. Who is the guardian for the student? Who are the staff members of EDUUS?

The guardian for the student will be a staff member from EDUUS that will always be in the area to assist the host family, school, and student. EDUUS also places additional regional staff. We will introduce host families to meet the guardian and the EDUUS staff at orientation. All host families will be given a contact list for the guardian, regional staff members, and EDUUS offices. Do not hesitate in contacting One School and EDUUS members at any hour!

5. What is the initial meeting like?

Korea is 14 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time - when you first meet the students, they will feel as though it is 3 or 4 in the morning! Please understand that they are jet lagged, in a bit of culture shock, and feeling shy.

As first impressions are very important, we ask that their room, whether a single or shared room, is neat and presentable. The student will also feel encouraged to keep their room clean.

The student may feel uncomfortable and inappropriate with initially addressing you as "mom" and/or "father" or "Mrs." and/or "Mr." Discuss this with the student and reach a mutual agreement early on, or they may avoid addressing you by any name at all.

Also, give the students a tour of the house, indicating where they are welcome and what is off-limits. Do not assume any information (plumbing facilities vary around the world!), and take the time to show the student how to operate bathroom and kitchen appliances. Explain the rules of your household, no matter how obvious you may think they are.

6. What is the background of the international exchange students? What are some main cultural differences?

We currently work with South Korea and China; all of our students will be of these backgrounds. Most families are generally from the upper and upper middle class from both countries. Many of the parents have studied in the states and are educated in English and the American culture. The English levels of the students vary, but they will all be able to understand basic spoken English and communicate with you.

Students are used to eating traditional Korean or Chinese food, however, they also enjoy the kid-friendly usual like pizza, burgers and French fries. Please try to be patient as some students may take longer to adjust to an American diet. Some students also bring food/snacks, which they may wish to eat for dinner or over the weekends.

Also, with the language barrier - communication is very important, regardless of their English level! If you have trouble with verbal communication, please try gestures, writing, or showing them things directly. Also, if a student is smiling or nodding, this does not necessarily mean they understand what you are saying. Ask comprehensive questions to make sure they understand.

Conversational English is very different from academic English; the student may get upset or discouraged because they are not as easily able to express their thoughts. However, kids are kids and they will soon open up and gain confidence.

7. What are some ways to help students assimilate?

As stated before, conversational English may be a lot of pressure in the beginning. Instead, try including them in family activities that do not require much conversation - for example, sports, cooking, baking, and/or art projects. The goal of the student is to communicate and converse more with native English speakers in order to improve their speaking, etc.

8. What if the student gets sick, hurt or there is an emergency? Do the students have insurance?

If the student has a fever or a cold, treat them how you would treat your own son or daughter. The parents are aware of over the counter medication, and in some cases, provide their own. Please notify One School and our Korean Partners who are their guardians and they will inform the parents. They usually bring their own medicines from Korea.

If it is a serious medical emergency - call 911 first! - then EDUUS and One School. EDUUS staff will be in the area, for the entire duration of the Winter Schooling Program for any such emergencies. They communicate with students' parents frequently about general well-being and inform them of any illness or injury.

All students have insurance. Once the hospital bill is generated, the student's family will pay for the costs and receive reimbursement when the student is back in Korea. Medical expenses are NOT the responsibility of the host family.

9. What if there is a conflict between the student and the host family?

If an issue is to occur, please try and address it with the student directly. Having EDUUS staff step in may distance the student from the family. Talk with them early and often as to not turn a small issue into a greater matter. If a problem persists, One School and EDUUS will step in to further explain and discipline the student. Often times, it is a simple matter of miscommunication / perception.

If a conflict between student and host family cannot be resolved, we will speak with the family to set a 'move out date' and place them with another host family.

10. What should the host family do with the students over the weekends?

Students are to participate with family activities as much as possible; this includes grocery shopping trips, attending sporting events, and family weekend trips. If the host family plans to have a trip overnight, or out of the state, please inform One School and EDUUS - we will speak to both the student and their family for a final approval.

In addition, EDUUS also plans trips for students to places such as field trips to Magic Kingdom Disney World, NASA Kennedy Space Center, Adventure Islands, Universal etc.

11. What are the guidelines and responsibilities of Host Family parents, as participating members of EDUUS?

Phone calls: Phone cards will also be provided to each student so they may make international calls to their family. Host families should assist the students on how to use a phone card, otherwise, the student may be charged without knowing, if they unfortunately get billed please let EDUUS know! Students are allowed to call twice a week during the weekends. We believe phone calls during the weekday is disruptive during the program. Please let them know when a good time to call is.

Pictures: We put together a compilation of pictures for the students and their families when the program is over. Our staff and our Korean partners will regularly takes pictures of them in school and during the programs. We ask host families to also contribute pictures since home life is also a very important part of the experience. These pictures can be sent via email or text message to the guardian or EDUUS staff throughout the program.

Home Stay Visits: Our partner, EDUUS staff will be stopping by each host family home two or three times during the program. One visit will be at the beginning, to see if students are getting acclimated and the rest will be casual check-ins. They will first notify parents to schedule a time for this 10-15 minute visit. During this visit, the guardian and staff speak briefly with the student and the family to see if communication is going well. As the parents in Korea are very curious about how their son/daughter is doing, EDUUS staff will also take pictures of them in their rooms or with other members of the family.

12. How does the host family receive the stipend?

One School will inform you of how we will handle the host family stipend.

13. What are some general rules for host family?

Students are not permitted to have personal TVs, VCRs or DVD players in their bedroom. Students are allowed internet access to email their family or friends, but are not allowed to spend hours playing games or surfing the web.

Students are to attend church every Sunday. They may, however, feel uncomfortable or shy attending youth group activities or meetings. Discuss this with your child and come to an agreement, many of them enjoy participating in retreats and other events.