



## Foreign Exchange Visitor Program Requirements and Procedures For Foreign Exchange Students Attending Pasco County Schools (J-1 Students)

### Rationale

The primary purpose of foreign exchange visitor programs is to improve the foreign students' knowledge of American culture and community life. A secondary purpose is to foster American knowledge of a foreign culture by allowing Pasco County students and their communities to experience international understanding on a personal basis.

### Sponsoring Organization Responsibilities

Placement of foreign exchange students in Pasco County high schools may be made by sponsoring organizations recognized and approved by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), and the District School Board of Pasco County.

Sponsoring organizations that wish to be considered for participation in Pasco County must submit their program descriptions, updated annually, to the District School Board of Pasco County. The program description must include the following:

1. the sponsoring organization's name, physical address, phone number, fax number, and the name and email address of a responsible party housed at the organization's office;
2. a local representative's name, address, phone number, mobile phone number and email address;
3. a description of the services provided by the sponsoring organization to the foreign students;
4. a description of how students are screened for English proficiency, including the type of assessment given;
5. a copy of the standard application and contract completed by prospective foreign exchange students; and
6. an action plan for placing students in appropriate homes, procedures for ensuring the quality of the host home and family, and a contingency plan for students in distress for reasons including, but not limited to, emotional, academic, and housing concerns.

The program description will be reviewed by the District Supervisor in the Office for Teaching and Learning for ESOL and World Languages, and submitted for School Board approval.

The Sponsoring Organization's responsibilities include:

1. It is required that the sponsoring organization's representative live not more than 50 miles from the Pasco Schools district office complex at 7227 Land O' Lakes Boulevard, Land O' Lakes, Florida.
2. Representatives of sponsoring organizations will be required to attend an annual meeting that will be held in the spring. Following this annual meeting, an updated list of approved sponsoring organizations will be provided to each high school.

### **Eligible Students**

Foreign exchange students will be placed in **grades 10 or 11 only**. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

All J-1 visitor exchange students must:

1. be at least 15 years of age (on the date of enrollment) and not older than 18½; which is the maximum age specified in CSJET policy.
2. have the required passport for verification of birth and J-1 visitor status.
3. have sufficient command of the English language to enable the student to function well in an English-speaking academic and community environment. (Note: Students will NOT be eligible to receive ESOL services.)
4. have appropriate medical insurance coverage. (Note: It is recommended that students have appropriate travel insurance.)

### **Placement of Eligible Students**

The foreign exchange student must be accepted by the principal for school placement prior to being placed with a host family residing in the attendance zone of the school.

Each high school may accept up to ½ of 1% of its total student population as foreign exchange students each year on a first come, first served basis. It is recommended that different countries be represented.

The sponsoring organization must apply for and obtain written approval from the principal for admission of the student by June 15 for a full academic year of study, or by November 15 for second semester participation. Approval will be contingent upon the sponsoring organization providing written evidence of a potential host family in the

school's attendance zone. Following principal approval, the sponsoring organization's representative will be notified no later than June 30 or November 30 respectively.

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization to assure a safe environment by visiting the home and interviewing the host family prior to student placement.

It is preferred that the host family have a child currently enrolled in the same school as the foreign exchange student to maximize the social/cultural exchange and successful acculturation into the school environment.

### **Registration of Eligible Students**

Preferred registration date and course choices will accompany the confirmation notice. The host family must make arrangements to enroll the student on the pre-arranged date OR prior to the second week of school.

The application shall include:

1. the student's translated school transcript stating the grades earned;
2. a brief course description of each class taken in the 9<sup>th</sup> and/or 10<sup>th</sup> grade which lists in English the exact title of the subject ("Algebra" -not "Mathematics") and describes the focus of course content;
3. the student's health record;
4. an assurance of appropriate medical insurance coverage;
5. the student's essay in English; and
6. English language test scores.

At the time of application, it shall be determined by the school's guidance counselor whether the student will be enrolled in grade 10 or 11. This decision shall be made based upon the Pasco County Student Progression Plan.

### **Enrollment of Eligible Students**

The exchange student, accompanied by a representative of the sponsoring organization and a member of the host family, will meet with the appropriate counselor to enroll the student. An orientation designed to acquaint the student with the Pasco County school and with the rules governing the behavior of all students will be provided by the school staff. The student will be required to follow all school rules and to participate fully in the educational program provided.

Upon student enrollment, the school will complete the District School Board of Pasco County Foreign Exchange Student Registration Checklist and forward it to the District

Supervisor in the Office for Teaching and Learning for ESOL and World Languages at the district office.

### **Scheduling of Eligible Students**

Foreign exchange students will pursue a plan of study typical for their U.S. grade level peers. Though the host school may invite them to participate in commencement activities, students participating in a foreign exchange program are not eligible to receive a diploma from a Pasco County high school. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

In the interest of providing a typical American high school program of study, enrollment in the following subjects is recommended:

#### 10<sup>th</sup>

English II  
World History  
Mathematics  
Science  
Elective  
Elective

#### 11<sup>th</sup>

English III  
American History  
Mathematics  
Science  
Elective  
Elective

Suggested electives: Fine Arts, World Language, Journalism, Physical Education, and Vocational.\*

\*J-1 students will be ineligible to participate in any work-study programs. Driver Education and JROTC are not permitted electives.

### **Athletic Eligibility**

Students will be governed by the Florida High School Activities Association rules and regulations regarding participation in interscholastic athletic competition. Sponsoring organizations shall not knowingly be a party to seeking out or permitting placements initiated by a host family, a school, a student or his/her parents, or any other interested party based on athletic abilities.

### **Student Transfers**

Out-of-county transfers will not be accepted unless the host family has relocated into Pasco County. The student in such a household must be represented by a sponsoring organization on the approved list for that school year. If this is not the case, the sponsoring organization will be directed to find another host family in the original district or to transfer the student to an organization on the approved list. Schools will accept in-district foreign exchange transfers as stated in School Board policy. The District School Board of Pasco County will only provide transportation within the normally

scheduled bus routes for students residing within the attendance zones of the school that the particular foreign exchange student attends.

### **Financial Support**

School related expenses are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization or the host family.

### **Compliance with Policies and Supervision**

Each foreign exchange student is expected to comply with the policies of the Pasco County School Board, including the Code of Student Conduct, and with all other legal provisions pertaining to the student.

It is the sponsoring organization's responsibility to resolve problems that arise among the student, the host family, and/or the school including, if necessary, the changing of the host family or the returning of the exchange student to his/her country in the event that any differences cannot be reconciled. The principal or designee will notify the District Supervisor in the Office for Teaching and Learning for ESOL and World Languages of any suspected neglect of the student on the part of the host family. All legal and appropriate guidelines shall be followed to provide for the safety and well being of the student. The Supervisor in the Office for Teaching and Learning for ESOL and World Languages will notify the sponsoring organization of any non-compliance status.

At the end of each academic school year, an evaluation of participating sponsoring organizations will be completed by each high school Foreign Exchange Program contact person and forwarded to the Supervisor in the Office for Teaching and Learning for ESOL and World Languages.

