

Cumberland Valley Christian School



**Handbook for International Students, Their Families,
Agencies and Host Families**

Cumberland Valley Christian School is willing to accept students from other countries. We feel that exposing our students to other cultures allows them to receive a glimpse of the world that they otherwise would not be able to experience. It also allows international students to experience American life and receive a distinctively Christian education. We believe having international students in our school allows us to follow the Biblical mandate of Matthew 28:19-20: "... Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

This handbook is provided for international students, their families, their agencies and host families. It does not replace rules, regulations and guidelines outlined in the *CVCS Parent-Student Handbook*, but rather it serves as a supplement that deals with instances that international students may face. All students, whether American or international, are bound by rules, regulations and guidelines set forth in the *CVCS Parent-Student Handbook*.

Certification

Cumberland Valley Christian School is designated by the Department of Homeland Security to issue I-20 forms to agents of international students. The international student may then apply for a student F-1 visa, which allows an international student to enter the United States for educational purposes.

Application Procedure

CVCS will accept international students at most grade levels, elementary as well as high school. However, there may be times when we believe a student may be too young to enter our school at the elementary level.

Many students enter CVCS at a young age and remain in the school through high school graduation. Others are here for only one or two years, depending on their educational needs.

Generally, the application process is as follows:

- The agency or representative of the international student will contact CVCS and provide personal and educational information about a student who wishes to apply to CVCS.
- CVCS officials will review the information and then decide whether to extend an opportunity to the student to apply for admission. This contact will be made through the student's agency.
- Once the agency informs CVCS that the student wishes to enroll in the school, the Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) or Designated School Official (DSO) will issue the I-20 form to the student.
- The agency will then be billed by CVCS for the student's tuition and fees.
- Every international student who enrolls in CVCS must be represented by an agency, unless the student is residing with a family member or members in the area. We believe that the agency offers three-fold protection: to the student, the school, and the host family.

- Agencies must provide academic transcripts, immunization forms, and any other documents that are deemed necessary for enrollment.
- Regarding immunizations, students are required to have all immunizations and vaccines required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Any student who does not have the required immunizations may not be admitted into school; or if he/she does not have those requirements after already having started school, he/she will not be allowed to attend school until records of immunizations are produced. *(Added June 2017).*

Payments

- International students will pay full regular tuition and fees, plus an additional international student fee.
- The tuition cost will include tuition and all applicable fees. It will not include the following, which are the responsibility of the student:
 - Lunch charges
 - Athletic fees or any cost that goes along with participating on an interscholastic team
 - Field trip fees
 - Cost of any required class materials outside of those provided by the teacher
- Tuition is expected to be paid in full in advance of enrollment.
- Payment of tuition and fees is non-refundable except in the case of an extreme circumstance (major illness, death in the family). However, notice of the extreme circumstance must be communicated through the student's agency, and any final determination concerning a refund will be at the discretion of the CVCS administration.
- Because of the amount of work involved in generating documentation, finding host families, and arranging other details for international students, tuition and fee payments cannot be refunded if, during the school year or contract year, a student decides to transfer to another school, is asked to withdraw, or is expelled.
 - **School year definition:** The school year begins in late August and ends in late May or early June.
 - **Contract year definition:** Some students may come to CVCS in January (or February) with the intention to stay until December. The January-December time frame (or any other time frame outside the normal school year) is considered the contract year.
- If a student enrolls in CVCS and pays tuition and fees but withdraws from CVCS before physically coming to school, CVCS will refund tuition minus 20% of the total for administrative costs.
- Fees paid by international students can be paid in cash (or other negotiable currency), wire transfer or credit card. However, any transfer fee for wiring funds or credit card usage is the responsibility of the international student's family and will be added to the cost of attending CVCS. A 5% fee will be charged to any payment made by debit card or credit card.

- The student will be charged for any fee incurred by CVCS for documents that need to be rush-delivered by Federal Express, UPS or any other delivery service.

Methods of Payment

- Concerning tuition, it is our school policy that if a student is represented by an agency that the agency collect money from the student's family and then pay the tuition and fees to the school.
- The school will not collect money directly from a student's family for tuition. The school will also not distribute payments to host families. That money is to be paid directly to the host family by the agency.
- Regarding lunch accounts or field trip fees, these are to be paid by the student or the student's family, not the host family. The student's family may deposit lunch money into an account through RenWeb, our online service, or the student may pay in cash.

Host Families

CVCS spends considerable time finding host families for international students. Therefore, it is advisable that once a student is placed with a host family, the student should remain with the host family for the entire school year.

If by mutual agreement among the school, agency and host family the student cannot stay in the host family's home, other host family arrangements may be made. **In most cases, if an agency determines that a student should leave a host family without proper justification, CVCS requires a 30-day written notice from the agency in advance of the departure.** If a student is not abiding by rules established by the host family, the host family may request that the student be removed from the home. If disregard for established rules continues either in the school or at home, the student may be asked to leave CVCS and could possibly have his/her I-20 revoked.

Basically, host families are responsible for providing room and board to the student. It is up to the host family as to how much more involved the family wants to be as far as extra meals, gifts, etc. The agency will pay a stipend to the host family. That stipend will be negotiated between the student's agency and the host family. CVCS will not become involved in those negotiations.

Students will have expense money provided to them through their parents, generally through a bank card or bank account. This includes money for clothing and other "extras," whether they are goods or services. Students are responsible for school lunches and activity or field trip fees through the accounts their parents set up for them.

Students may also do whatever chores are necessary around the house, such as cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, laundry, etc., as long as they are kept within reasonable limits.

Host families should set reasonable limits regarding phone calls, internet use and regular bedtime.

Host families may have to undergo background checks required by agencies.

It is important that you treat the student as part of the family, not as a guest, and hold the student accountable for actions the way you would any other child in the family.

Basic responsibilities of the host parent(s):

Here are a few expectations for host families regarding international students. There may be a few exceptions, depending on your own house rules, but generally host families should have students follow rules and guidelines without being domineering.

1. Providing room and board for the child (sharing a room is acceptable).
2. Family meals (breakfast and dinner on school days; breakfast, lunch and dinner during the weekend and holidays).
3. Promoting the use of the English language at home; they are here to receive an education and understand the English language.
4. Making sure students arrive and get home from school, either via a school bus or alternative transportation.
5. Arranging for transportation for students if they are involved in extracurricular activities (sports, plays, choir, etc.)
6. Making sure students receive medical treatment at either a doctor, emergency room or an urgent care center, depending on the seriousness of the injury or illness. Medical insurance is provided through the student's agency. Any co-pays are the responsibility of the student, not the host family.
7. Signing such routine school documents as absentee notes, permission slips, conduct referrals, etc.
8. Reporting any serious discipline matters to school administration.
9. Making sure students adhere to CVCS dress code guidelines.
10. Providing a strong Biblical example and giving the students sound Biblical advice and counseling, and ensuring the student is attending church regularly.
11. Making arrangements for the child in the event of a family situation that would require the student to have another short term placement (i.e., weekend plans or scheduled family vacations that the international student will not attend).
12. Holding the student accountable for proper behavior in the home, school, church, and community.
13. Holding the student accountable for all homework assignments.
14. Treating the student as if he or she were your own child.

Rules international students should follow:

1. Proper attire must be worn at school; students must adhere to the CVCS dress code, which includes not only clothes but hair length and color, hair style, body piercings and other clothing, accessories and styles outlined in the dress code.
2. No "skinny" pants: defined as pants that are fitted around the calf and ankle.
3. Cell phone possession and usage are at the discretion of the host family.
4. No excessive computer time each day; computer use guidelines in the home will be determined by host parents.
5. The bedroom door should never be locked.
6. Phone or Skype calls to home should be kept within reasonable limits as determined by the host family.
7. Contact agency or school administration if any problems arise.

Expectations for the International Student

1. Obey all rules of the host family.
2. Do all homework assignments in a timely manner and maintain good grades.
3. Become a part of the host family by joining in family activities, as appropriate.
4. Do not shut yourself away in your room for long periods.
5. Participate in household chores, as requested.
6. Communicate effectively with the host family any requests or needs.
7. Contact agency or school administration if any problems arise that cannot be handled by the host parents.

Agencies may place rules, guidelines and restrictions on their students beyond what is required by CVCS. Such action is between the agency and the student. However, agencies may not invoke rules, regulations or guidelines that come in direct conflict with or mitigate the CVCS Handbook.

Cell Phones

International students may have cell phones in school in line with the CVCS Bring Your Own Device policy as long as the host family and/or agency permit them to have cell phones. International students must register their cell phone number with CVCS to be kept on file in case of an emergency or an urgent need to contact the international student. *(Updated 2-24-15)*

School Year

International students are expected to be in school from the beginning of the school year to the end. We realize that sometimes international students may have to arrive after the starting date of school for a variety of reasons. However, students should not plan to leave before the official last day of school as outlined on the school calendar.

If a student attempts to leave school early without receiving permission from the school, that student will receive zeros in any test, quiz or assignment he/she misses. The student may be in danger of not receiving passing grades for the year and may run the risk of having his/her I-20 revoked.

Concerning regularly scheduled breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, students are expected to be in school until the last school day before the break and return on the first scheduled school day after the break. *(Added June 2017)*

Insurance

Medical insurance for doctor appointments and emergencies will be provided through the international student's agency. Any co-pays or costs above the co-pay are the responsibility of the student, not the host family.

CVCS will not provide insurance for any international student, nor will the school be a broker for any insurance company.

For dental care, the host family should contact the agency.

Minimum Scores for Acceptance

Generally, CVCS requires a minimum SLEP score of between 50-55, or a TOEFL Jr. minimum score (for 11-14 year olds) of between 700-750. For the TOEFL ibt (internet based), CVCS will accept a minimum score of 52. New students may opt out of ESL classes if they score 100 or higher on the TOEFL ibt.

ESL Classes

CVCS provides English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to international students throughout their first semester at CVCS and beyond as needed. ESL classes benefit the international student by providing learning support as the student acclimates to a new culture and a new language learning environment. *(Updated 2-24-15)*

It is not mandatory that students take an ESL class, but CVCS may require the student to take an ESL class if the school administration believes the student does not have enough English proficiency to succeed in the classroom.

Cost for ESL classes is \$100 per student. That price is subject to change, but students and their agencies will be notified in advance of any price change.

Schedule of Classes

International students will take a regular course of study at CVCS. Additionally, virtual and dual enrollment classes will be open to them if they wish to take them. Any extra cost for virtual or dual enrollment classes is the responsibility of the student.

However, students will not be placed in foreign language classes unless they wish to be included in those classes. They will take either another class or have a study hall during the period in which the foreign language class is offered to the rest of their class.

Athletics, Activities

International students are permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics and any other activity that is open to the student body. Students must meet all age and academic eligibility requirements in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. *(Updated 2-24-15)*

Withdrawal of Students

An international student may withdraw from CVCS at any time as long as the student has the permission of the agency. Students may not withdraw on their own volition and try to make a deal with another school or to quit school entirely. In that case, the student's I-20 may be revoked.

In the event of a withdrawal during the school or contract year, no tuition and/or fees will be refunded once the student has physically entered CVCS.

Senior Year Students

CVCS will accept international students for their senior year. They will be able to graduate from CVCS if 1) they are here for the entire school year, and 2) they have met all graduation requirements. Those graduation requirements may include courses they have taken at CVCS as well as courses they have taken at previous schools.

CVCS will occasionally accept senior-year international students after the school year begins. However, depending on how soon after the start of school a senior-year international student arrives at CVCS, he/she may not be eligible to receive a diploma from CVCS.

Furthermore, a senior-year international student who comes to CVCS after Christmas break is not eligible to graduate or receive a diploma from CVCS. An international student enrolling in CVCS at that time of the school year is coming with the understanding that he/she is simply using CVCS as preparation for higher education. The student will receive a transcript of grades but will not receive a high school diploma. *(Updated 2-26-16)*

Transfer Procedure

If a student is transferring after the end of a school year, the student must follow this procedure:

- The student's agency must contact CVCS announcing the student's intention to transfer to another school.
- The student's new school must then provide CVCS with a request to transfer the student's I-20 and academic/health records.
- After that request is received, CVCS will transfer all necessary documents to the new school once the school year is over and all grades are complete. The transfer release date for the I-20 will not occur before the final day of the CVCS school year.
- Students must transfer to another school that has been approved by the Department of Homeland Security to enroll international students.
- When a student graduates, CVCS will transfer the I-20 to the college the student will be attending.
- If the student is leaving the country and either not returning to a school or a college in the United States, the I-20 will be allowed to expire. If the student wishes to return to the United States to resume his/her education at a later time, the student must apply for a new visa.

Agency Policy

It is the policy of CVCS that a student will not switch agencies while attending CVCS unless there is a mutual agreement among CVCS and the agencies involved. CVCS will not allow the actions of one or several students to harm its relationship with various agencies that place students in CVCS. Therefore, if a student wishes to dismiss his or her current agency and pick up a contract with another agency, the student will not be allowed to re-enroll in CVCS unless we receive written documentation from both agencies regarding the change.

Students may not drop an agency entirely and attend CVCS without agency representation.

CVCS will not deal exclusively with any one agency for students.

Online Grading System

CVCS uses RenWeb for recording of grades, lesson plans and homework. Host families and agencies will be granted access to RenWeb for their students as long as they can provide a

valid email address. Host families and agencies will be able to view grades, check assignments and request progress reports through RenWeb.

Additionally, an international student's biological parents may be granted access to RenWeb as long as they can provide a valid email address. That request must come in writing from the student's agency.

Once host families, agencies and biological parents are granted entrance into RenWeb, they will find instructions on how to access RenWeb on the CVCS website at www.cvcsblazers.com.

Revoking of I-20

CVCS reserves the right to revoke an international student's I-20 if the student is expelled from school or is asked to withdraw. CVCS also may revoke an I-20 if a student attempts to withdraw from the school without going through proper procedures.

In the event that an I-20 is revoked, CVCS will immediately contact the Department of Homeland Security, and the international student will have to leave the country.

Dress Code

What follows is the CVCS Dress Code, as outlined in the *Parent-Student Handbook*. No exceptions are made for international students.

The dress code will be as follows for all grades of the school:

- CLOTHING

- **TOPS** – All tops must be collared polo shirts that have buttons and can be of any color, print, striped and/or have a logo in the pocket area. All tops must reflect our values as Christians (e.g., nothing referencing alcohol, drugs, gothic styles, skulls, etc.). Long-sleeved T-shirts may be worn under polo shirts. Only sweat shirts and sweaters may be worn over polo shirts, and long-sleeved polo shirts may be worn as well. Girls must have a natural inch give around the chest area.
- **No** button down shirts, t-shirts, or other shirts.

- **SLACKS** – Must be of twill or cotton in a solid color. Girls must have a one-inch leeway on legs and posterior, and slacks must not be made of stretch material (includes Spandex, Lycra, nylon, etc.). Docker, corduroy, flare, boot cut or cargo styles are permissible.
- **No** "skinny pants," jeans, shorts, capris, sweatpants, windpants, or athletic pants with stripes down the side.

- **SKIRTS** – Same material as slacks, and the length must be at least to the bottom of the kneecap. They must be solid color uniform type- plain or pleated or straight skirts only.
- **No** skorts, prairie or peasant skirts (wide, light flowing).
- If girls wear leggings under a skirt, the skirt must come to appropriate length as outlined in the dress code.

- **JUMPERS**- solid color uniform type only with a polo underneath.
 - **No** dresses of any type including polo dresses.
- HAIR
 - ***Hair must be naturally colored. No alternative hairstyles (“punk,” “emo,” “Mohawk,” etc.) are permitted. Boys may wear hair to the bottom of ear but off the collar and eyebrows, and boys’ sideburns may be no longer than the bottom of the ear. Boys must be clean shaven. Hairstyles may be evaluated at the discretion of the administration.***
- SOCKS AND STOCKINGS
 - Hosiery need not be worn
- BODY MARKINGS
 - No tattoos or other body markings
 - No piercing of tongue, nose, eyebrows, lips, face
- FOOTWEAR
 - Sneakers, sandals, dress or causal shoes, crocks, and wedge heel thick flip-flops are acceptable
 - **No** flip-flops that are thin soled. If they can bend, they are not allowed.
- ACCESSORIES
 - No earrings for boys
 - Girls may wear earrings, but earrings must be worn in the earlobes and/or cartilage; however, only one earring in the cartilage of each ear along with one(s) in the lobes is permitted.
 - Boys – may wear necklaces
 - ***Wording on clothing or accessories should reflect Christian values.*** No vulgar, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate symbols, language, or wording will be permitted on clothing or accessories. Accessories (book bags, jewelry, hats, etc.) that display alcohol, tobacco, or other drug symbols are not permitted. Gang attire and gang symbols are also not permitted to be worn or displayed on accessories. Wearing excessive accessories or clothing that could pose a safety threat to one’s self or others is not allowed. This includes heavy chains not made as jewelry, fishhooks, studded bracelets or collars, etc.
- HEADGEAR
 - Hats, sunglasses, head stockings, or kerchiefs must not be worn in buildings. No picks or combs are allowed in hair.
- Summary Comments

What happens if you do violate the dress code? Several things could happen. You may be embarrassed when a teacher or administrator asks you to call home for a change of clothes. You may also be given a detention or worse. This also may go on your discipline record. So think before you pull on those clothes. If you have any questions or doubts if an outfit is appropriate for school, it probably isn't. Find something else to wear. Special dress or costumes may be worn during the school day, for special occasions, when approved by the administration.

The administration will make the final judgment on the appropriateness of dress and reserves the right to prohibit students from wearing any article of clothing or accessory which may result in the disruption of school environment.

AGENTS:

Please complete this part of the page, detach or print it and return it to CVCS.

I have reviewed this handbook.

Signature of Agent/Representative:

Date:

HOST FAMILIES:

Please complete this part of the page, detach or print it and return it to CVCS.

I have reviewed this handbook with my student(s):

List Student(s):

Grade:
