



# LTStudies International Handbook





## **LONG TRAIL** SCHOOL

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

LTStudies International is committed to enhancing cultural diversity within the school community. Long Trail provides international students with an intensive, college-preparatory program, which emphasizes the significance of other cultures and the need for active participation in global affairs. Long Trail School appreciates and values all members of the world community.

## **ABOUT OUR PROGRAM**

Long Trail School enrolled its first international student in 1987. LTStudies International was formally established in 2002 with a goal of cultural diversity and enriched global perspectives.

International students come to Long Trail from around the world. Countries represented recently include Austria, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Australia.

All international students are housed with LTS families. This provides both continued exposure to American culture and the emotional support necessary to succeed academically and socially far from home.

## LETTER FROM THE HEAD



Welcome to Long Trail School! As you will quickly see, your enrollment in LTS will provide you with so many opportunities to learn through and about life in Vermont and in the United States. Long Trail is a unique learning community where curiosity, perspective and participation matter. In your days at the school, you will be asked to share and to stretch yourself in groups and individually, as a means of growth and understanding. We are excited to have you here and for you to be a part of the exceptional occasions for learning.

The information outlined herein, in addition to the Student/Parent Handbook provided by the Office of Student Life, is important. Be sure to review it carefully so that you understand how to be successful this year.

I look forward to getting to know you and hope you will find the time to stop by my office to visit. It's going to be an EXCEPTIONAL year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Deo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Head of School

# LTStudies International

To make the transition from the home country to life in Vermont easier, international students should come prepared.

## **RULES and POLICIES**

International students are required to follow the rules and policies stated in the Student/Parent Handbook.

## **ARRIVAL & FLIGHT ITINERARY**

International students should arrive prior to the first day of school, allowing sufficient time to recover from jet lag, to settle in with their homestay families, and to finalize preparations for the start of school. Students who play sports are required to arrive earlier to take part in pre-season training. The Director of LTStudies International must be notified in advance in order to make the necessary arrangements for an early arrival.

International parents should e-mail their child's flight itinerary to the Director of LTStudies International at least two weeks prior to travel.

All travel must be booked in/out of the Albany International Airport unless specific arrangements otherwise have been made with the Director of LTStudies International. LTS and/or the homestay families provide international students transportation to/from the Albany airport at start and end of the school year. All other travel arrangements are made at the expense of the international parents.

## **MEDICAL**

If the international student wears eyeglasses and/or contact lenses, please bring an extra pair and a copy of the doctor's prescription, written in English.

If medication is being prescribed to the international student, a copy of the doctor's prescription, written in English, must accompany the student. All prescriptions must come in the original container that is appropriately labeled with the student's name, name of medication, dosage instructions, name and address of the prescribing doctor.

The international student is advised to update any prescriptions and visit the dentist for an annual exam before leaving the home country.

## **INSURANCE**

All international students must have insurance coverage prior to their arrival in the U.S. If the student does not carry his/her own insurance, a policy can be purchased through the LTS business office at the expense of the international parents. Students must carry their insurance card with them at all times.

## **FORMS**

Emergency and permission forms are mailed in the summer and must be signed by international parents and returned to the Director of LTStudies International by the start of the school year.

## **ACADEMIC**

**We are a community that expects honesty and integrity in actions and words.** Success in our community depends on our ability to trust each other. Peers and adults rely on the trustworthiness of what a student does, says, or produces in the classroom, during extracurricular activities, and in every other aspect of school life. Dishonesty is unacceptable. Students are expected to take responsibility for their actions and decisions.

**Honesty is expected in the classroom** whether on a test, paper, lab, or homework. Academic honesty promotes educational growth and independent thinking. *Cheating* is giving or receiving answers in or out of class; giving or receiving information about the content of a quiz, test, or exam; doing someone else's work; using an on-line translator for a world language course assessment; or having someone else do one's work. *Plagiarism is using words or ideas* from any outside source without attribution (including student, author, website, or reference work) or paraphrasing, again without attribution, any other source as if it were one's own. In addition, handing in work that has already received credit in another course or school or in the same course during a different year is considered dishonest.

Personal translators may be used at the discretion of the teacher.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is required for those students who are planning on continuing on to college in the United States. International students are required to take the TOEFL once a year unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the International Director and Director of College Guidance.

## **FINANCES**

Due to the immigration status of the international students, employment outside of the school is prohibited.

The Director of LTStudies International will help the student open a bank account in the community. The international student will be responsible for maintaining his/her account.

The international student should bring enough spending money to purchase needed school items and lunches, clothing and personal items and entertainment, and have enough money in case of an emergency.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- International students are prohibited from driving and/or owning a motorized vehicle while enrolled at LTS.
- Normal transportation to and from school is provided within the areas that LTS provides bussing.
- The international student needs to complete the *Permission to Ride with Student Driver* form (available in the Office of Student Life) if he/she wishes to be a passenger in a car driven by anyone under age 18 and not a member of the homestay family.
- Any other transportation needs should be arranged by the international student with the homestay family.
- Hitchhiking is prohibited at all times.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR**

All students are expected to participate in the life of the LTS community through extracurricular activities. International students are required to participate in at least one team sport, JISP or drama production each year.

## **TRIPS**

Trips enhance the international student's cultural experience while attending LTS. Long Trail School provides a yearly trip to a major city in the Northeast which is included in the international student's tuition. Short trips are also arranged during the year so that students experience the many cultural sights and sounds of the United States. Destinations vary every year and may incur an extra expense.

## **TRAVEL**

Long Trail School is responsible for the safety of our international students and must adhere to immigration laws and regulations. We must know of the student's whereabouts at all times. The Director of LTStudies International will meet with each international student at the start of the school year to

discuss travel plans throughout the school year. When the international student is traveling home or with his/her legal parent(s) or guardian, the international parents must provide their child's itinerary to the Director of LTStudies International.

If the international student is traveling out of state with his/her homestay family, the homestay parent submits the *Permission to Travel & Itinerary* form to keep LTS informed of all travel plans.

PLEASE NOTE: VISA REGULATIONS DIFFER WITH EACH COUNTRY. MAKE CERTAIN THAT ALL REGULATIONS ARE KNOWN BEFORE PLANNING TO ENTER OR EXIT THE UNITED STATES.

If the international student plans on remaining with the homestay family beyond June, arrangements need to be made with the homestay family. The Director of LTStudies International must be informed of all schedules if the international student remains with the homestay family or in the United States during the summer break.

## HOMESTAY LIFE

### **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

One of the best ways to adjust to a new culture is to live with a homestay family. Living and studying abroad provides the opportunity to understand another culture. All international students should consider themselves an integral part of the family. As with all members of a family, courtesy and respect should always be the primary consideration.

- The international student will abide by the rules established by the homestay family.
- The international student will be respectful of all property.
- The international student will keep the homestay family advised as to where he/she is at all times.
- The international student is responsible for buying personal items beyond those normally used by the family.
- The international student is encouraged to support and participate in family events.
- To make the homestay experience enjoyable for everyone, it is strongly advised that the international student ask to share customs and events special to his/her own country with the family.
- All international students should realize that assimilation into the family takes time. Problems should be discussed with family members before they become major issues. The Director of LTStudies International should be contacted as soon as possible when the international student feels that problems cannot be solved.

### **HOMESTAY PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

The homestay family plays an important role in the life of the international student. The nurturing environment of the homestay family contributes to the cultural, social, emotional, and academic growth of the international student. Housing and living with an international student also provides all family members with life-long experiences and memories.

A monthly stipend is provided to all homestay families for housing and living expenses incurred and for the acknowledgement that housing a student takes time and effort. The international student realizes that this stipend is not for personal expenses incurred by him/her. The stipend does not cover special extended family trips unless otherwise arranged.

Homestay families will receive a 1099 at the end of the year for tax purposes.

LTS suggests that homestay families consult with their insurance companies to ensure that they are properly covered.

- The homestay family is responsible for knowing the whereabouts of the international student at all times.
- The homestay family is expected to oversee the international student's academics, including attending parent-teacher conferences, special events in which the international student is involved, and daily homework.
- Household rules that apply to other children in the homestay household should also apply to the international student.
- American culture, in most cases, is very different from the culture of the international student. Explanations of what is acceptable or not acceptable in conversation or actions may need to be made to the international student. Please remember that the international student is not trying to be rude; he/she may just not know that a conversation or action is inappropriate.
- Please ask the international student about his/her home country. Sharing customs and special events make the homestay experience enjoyable and special for everyone.
- The U.S. has its own customs and events that the international student may not understand. Share custom and event information.
- It is understood that the homestay family may not be able to include the international student in certain family plans. If that is the case, please notify the Director of LTStudies International for temporary housing arrangements.
- The international student, unless special arrangements have been made, should leave the homestay family as soon after the end of school as possible.
- If there is a family emergency and the international student needs to be housed elsewhere, please notify the Director of LTStudies International.
- If the homestay family suspects that the international student is using, under the influence of, distributing, or in possession of illegal drugs/alcohol, please notify the Director of LTStudies International immediately.
- Please do not let problems become major issues. If the homestay family is experiencing difficulties, notify the Director of LTStudies International as soon as possible.

## **ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES**

One of the best ways to become aware of our own cultural values, expectations, and customs is to live in another foreign country. What one culture values as important, another may not. What is considered rude or impolite in one country may be perceived as a sign of respect or appreciation in another. Living and studying abroad allows us to explore our feelings, anxieties, misperceptions, and attitudes about others. Ultimately, it provides the opportunity to appreciate differences while recognizing our commonalities.

### **Conclusions Drawn From Cross-Cultural Training Experts**

- What seems logical, sensible, important and reasonable to a person in a culture may seem irrational, stupid and unimportant to an outsider.
- Feelings of apprehension, loneliness, lack of confidence are common when visiting another culture.
- When people talk about other cultures, they tend to describe the differences and not the similarities.
- Differences between cultures are generally seen as threatening and described in negative terms.
- One should make up one's own mind about another culture and not rely on the reports and experiences of others.
- It requires experience as well as study to understand the many subtleties of another culture.
- Understanding another culture is a continuous and not a discrete process.
- The feelings which people have for their own language are often not evident until they encounter another language.
- It is probably necessary to know the language of another foreign culture to understand that culture in any depth.

- Perhaps a person can accept a culture only after he or she has been very critical of it.

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

This term was coined in 1958 to describe the anxiety a person feels when moving to a completely new environment. The feeling usually sets in a few weeks after arriving in a new place and is marked by physical and emotion discomfort. Everything may be different, including not speaking the language fluently, social and academic expectations, eating customs and how to use the telephone.

## **SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK**

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Preoccupation with health
- Aches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identification with and idealizing one's own culture
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Inability to solve simple problems
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Development of stereotypes about the new culture
- Development of obsessions, such as over-cleanliness
- Longing for family

## **STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK**

- First Stage -The person may feel euphoric and pleased by everything new encountered. This is called the "honeymoon" stage where everything is new and exciting.
- Second Stage -The person may experience some difficulties or crises. Communication and understanding may be difficult. The person may feel discontent, angry, impatient, and dissatisfied.
- Third Stage -The person gains some understanding of the new culture. There is a new sense of pleasure and humor. There is less of a sense of being lost and more of a feeling of direction.
- Fourth Stage -The person recognizes both the positive and negative attributes of the new culture.
- Fifth Stage -This occurs when the person returns to his/her country of origin and is called "re-entry or reverse culture shock."

## **OVERCOMING CULTURE SHOCK**

- Understand that these stages are fluid and may present at different times.
- Get involved with your new culture.
- Be patient and do not try too hard.
- Allow your feelings and be easy on yourself.
- Relaxation, meditation, and physical exercise are proven to help relieve stress.
- Maintain contact with family and friends.
- Maintain your confidence in yourself.
- Share your culture with others.
- If you feel stressed, ask for help.

