

Valley Christian Schools
Policies for International Student Admittance
Updated 01/01/2019

1. All parents, students, and HomeStay families must read and understand all of Valley Christian Schools' policies. By signing the enrollment documents, families are agreeing to the standards and rules detailed in the VCS Campus Handbook as well as the guidelines in this document. If needed, you must have the documents translated.
2. Prior to leaving the home country for Valley Christian Schools, the student's parents should discuss the importance of good behavior with their student and ensure that he or she understands the significance of acting in a manner that will reflect well on his or her family and country.
3. Students must follow all policies created by the Administrative Staff of Valley Christian Schools outlined in this handbook as well as their VCS Campus Student Handbook and any amendments or modifications made by VCS.
4. VCS is an English speaking campus. English is to be spoken on campus during school hours and all school activities. Students must meet the standards to be English language proficient as demonstrated by a recognized language proficiency test. The student must make a concerted effort to continually improve his or her ability in the English language.
5. Prior to receiving an I-20 form, students must make full tuition payment, refundable only if the visa is denied. It will be refunded upon Valley Christian's receipt of the original denial letter from the U.S. Embassy stating the reason for denial. International Student tuition and fees are otherwise non-refundable regardless of attendance. The unused HomeStay fees, Student Account, and Health Insurance will be refunded.
6. All students, 7th – 12th grade are required to purchase an iPad from VCS only. Details about the iPad Learning Program are posted to the Valley Christian Schools website at www.vcschools.org/ipads.
7. The student and his/her parents must communicate with the International Student Program Coordinator (ISPC) prior to the student's departure from the home country. Students may not legally arrive in the USA prior to 30 before the first day of school. New students must arrive at Los Angeles Airport by July 26, 2019.
8. VCS reserves the right to terminate a student's participation in the International Student Program if his or her conduct is considered detrimental or incompatible with the interests of VCS. In this case, all fees paid will be non-refundable and the student's I-20 will be cancelled.
9. The student must obey the laws of the United States and the states where they live and visit. A student found guilty of violating the law will be returned home at his family's own expense as soon as the student is released by authorities. Students must be escorted home by a parent, agent, or legal guardian.
10. The student must return home within 5 days of the last day of school. They may not return home before the last day of school. HomeStays will not provide housing during summer break. HomeStays are not required to keep your room for you during the summer months. Students need to pack all their belongs they are leaving for the summer and make storage plans.
11. If a student wants to stay for the summer break, you need to make arrangements directly with your HomeStay. Your school year HomeStay is not required to allow you to live with them during the summer.

12. In the month of May of a given school year, the I-20 will be extended for another academic year provided: the student has done well academically, a HomeStay family is available (and has applied by April 15 1) for the student for the following year, and full tuition for the following year has been received by the Business Office. All decisions about the following year must be in place by April 15 or your spot at VCS can be given to a new student on our waiting list.
13. Parents, students and/or agents must communicate directly with the International Student Program Coordinator (ISPC) for any and all official business regarding their student.
14. Students and families agree to support the Valley Christian Schools staff in its goals, procedures and discipline policies and understand that Valley Christian Schools is a private institution and reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any student who does not abide by VCS standards and requirements.
15. International Student tuition is non-refundable. If a student does not attend when the visa is approved or leaves once the school year begins, there will be no refund of tuition. A refund of HomeStay fees, student account, and remaining health insurance policy will be refunded.

SCHOOL

16. A diploma and graduation are not guaranteed for any student. Student should consult his or her guidance counselor about the requirements for graduation. See also VCHS Grade Transfer Policy regarding transcripts.
17. The student must make an effort to get involved in VCS by attending and participating in school activities, sports, and/or clubs. We encourage each student to belong to at least 1 on-campus sport or club. The student should not spend all his or her time with other international students and should seek guidance from HomeStay parents and school personnel when choosing friends.
18. The student's acceptance into Valley Christian High School does not guarantee athletic eligibility. An eligibility ruling is made for each individual case by the CIF.
19. The student will attend school regularly and will be enrolled as a full-time student. The student must make a concerted effort to make satisfactory academic progress. If a student is achieving below a 3.0 average and/or a D or F grade at a progress report, the HomeStay and/or ISPC may require additional study hours, tutor, and limit co-curricular and weekend activities until the grade is improved.
20. International Students who fall below a 3.0 GPA for 1 semester will be put on Academic Probation. If the GPA is not raised about a 3.0 the following semester, the student may be dismissed from VCS.
21. Students are expected to attend school every day. At 11 absences in any class, the student may be dropped from class, which can affect their F-1 visa status and could be dismissed from VCS.
22. International Students that travel home for during the school year (Christmas, Easter, or other reasons) and need to take additional school days for travel MUST provide the ISPC a copy of airline tickets minimum of 10 days before travel. Any schools days missed before or after breaks (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Breaks) will be unexcused unless cleared before you leave. Teachers are not required to let you make up work that you miss during unexcused absences. These absences are counted in the 11 allowed per semester.
23. Students not taking at least 10 days during Christmas Break to return home will be charged an additional \$500. This will be added by VCS to the December stipend to be paid to the HomeStay.

24. Students are expected to cooperate fully with dress and grooming standards, the Christian standards of the school, and that they refrain from the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages and narcotics, (unless prescribed by a physician), **at all times including non-school hours**. The student is not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Smoking and the use of any tobacco products is forbidden. The drinking of any alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. US law strictly forbids the consumption of alcohol for everyone under age 21. **Violations of these standards shall constitute grounds for immediate dismissal from Valley Christian Schools.**
25. All students will dress in the contracted school uniforms during the regular school day which begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. Information will be provided to you upon acceptance to VCS and is found in your campus handbook.
26. Students consent and authorize VCS to use the student's name, photograph, file or video likeness or any comments or statements of the student in materials, publications or on websites to promote the school. No personal information will be publicized.
27. New Valley Christian School students, 7th – 12th grades, must attend International Student Orientation. This orientation begins on July 28, 2019 for 2 weeks. More information on the orientation will be sent after acceptance.
28. VCS has a 3-step discipline process for International Students.
 - a. **Talk** with student
 - b. **Phone** parents
 - c. **Plane** – buy a flight and send the student home

In some instances, VCS will find the discipline issue severe and skip #a and/or #b.

HOMESTAY

29. Students living with VCS appointed and approved HomeStay will be accepted in grades 7th-12th.
30. Students may live with biological parents who carry valid business visas or green cards and will be accepted in all grades. Any exception to this policy is at the discretion of the HomeStay Program Coordinator and International Student Committee.
31. HomeStay Families must meet VCS standards of current admission policy by demonstrating a committed relationship to Jesus Christ and membership in a Bible believing church. Students must attend church with HomeStays for a minimum of once a week and participate with their youth group as required by your HomeStay.
32. All HomeStays are to complete a VCS application and background checks on all members of the family living in the home over the age of 18. (Required by the US State Department/Department of Justice)
33. VCS will provide a HomeStay within 10 miles of the VCS campus, if possible. We will try to find homes that are closer when possible.
34. The HomeStay family assignment is for one academic year. No new placements will be made during the year except for extreme emergencies. If both parties agree, student's can stay with the family for more than one year. VCS does not guarantee family material status (married or single parent) or ethnic background for any student requests. Some students will be the only international student in a HomeStay while others will have a roommate. If a student requests a new HomeStay for the new school year, an additional \$2,000.00 HomeStay placement fee will be assessed.

35. HomeStay placements and addresses are registered with the Department of Homeland Security for purposes of tracking International Students. Students are not allowed to move without notifying and permission from the ISPC.
36. The student will become an integral part of the HomeStay family, assuming duties and responsibilities considered customary for a child of his or her age in the host family household. This may include cooking, doing dishes, helping with laundry, and cleaning the home. As a part of their family, HomeStays will not ask for more money from the student for additional food costs (unless for special diet or request), transportation, family outings or anything that they would not charge their own children.
37. By enrolling in VCS, you are agreeing to be responsible for any loss or damage to VCS school property or at the HomeStay house that your student may cause.
38. Problems that arise in the HomeStay are to be resolved first through discussion with the HomeStay family, then with the assistance of the ISPC or their VCS counselor. The student and/or HomeStay family is not to discuss problems of a personal nature with members of the community. If the student is experiencing any sort of relational stress or difficulty, or experiences abuse or harassment of any kind, he or she will immediately disclose the incident to the ISPC or their counselor.
39. A personal cell phone by a US cell provider must be provided to each International Student by his or her parents. The HomeStay will assist in getting one if needed. The student will provide the ISPC and everyone in their HomeStay family with their cell phone number.
40. Students may bring their own computer. The HomeStay family residence will provide Internet access, this is not required to be wifi or available in bedrooms. The HomeStay will have access to any information on the student's computer, iPad, and/or cell at all times and may install internet filtering software to the computer. HomeStay parents and VCS will have access to all passwords on all electronics. The HomeStay may limit Internet and cell phone usage to certain hours of the day if they feel it is interfering with academic progress or with face-to-face social connections. Inappropriate use of the Internet by the student, including viewing pornography or visiting questionable websites, is not acceptable. Such activity may result in program termination.
41. VCS recommends that all HomeStay families require students not to have any electronic devices in their bedroom. If they are used in the bedroom, then the door should remain open. All electronic devices should be stored overnight outside of the bedroom in a specified place.
42. The student is forbidden from participating in any dangerous sports or activities such as hang gliding, bungee jumping, and skydiving. The student's family will accept full responsibility for any situation arising from the student's involvement in a forbidden activity.
43. Room and board is included in the tuition amount. The student may wish to purchase items such as clothing, room decorations, entertainment, tutors, and music lessons. He or she may also wish to attend dances, extra-curricular events, and senior trip. These expenses can be paid for by the student's account they have with VCS or additional funds sent to the student during the school year by his or her parents.
44. The student may not operate a motorized vehicle including the HomeStay family's vehicle or any friend's vehicle. Nor will the student get his/her California driver license or permit before turning 18. Students at VCS may not drive on solely an International Drivers License.
45. Students under the age of 18, are not to take public transportation unaccompanied by a guardian (guardian is your HomeStay family or an approved adult). This includes all rideshare

app based services (taxi, Uber, Lyft). HomeStay families are responsible for coordinating transportation. Public city buses can be taken with HomeStay approval for short distances.

46. You must be at least 18 years of age to obtain a rideshare app based account. Account registration requires you to submit to certain personal information, such as your name, address, mobile phone number and age, as well as at least one valid payment method. You agree to maintain accurate, complete, and up-to-date information in your account. Your failure to maintain accurate, complete, and up-to-date account information, including having an invalid or expired payment method on file, may result in your inability to access or use the Services. You are responsible for all activity that occurs under your account, and you agree to maintain the security and secrecy of your account username and password at all times. The service is not available for use by persons under the age of 18. You may not authorize third parties to use your account, and you may not allow persons under the age of 18 to receive transportation using your account. You may not assign or otherwise transfer your account to any other person or entity.
47. Bus fees are covered by the International Student fees. Valley Christian busses are for transportation to and from the HomeStay and school. The HomeStay parents are to coordinate transportation to all other school activities, tutors, study groups, etc. within reason *at no additional charge to the student*. International Students may not ride in a car with another student who is not legal to transport passengers. This is any driver under 18 who has not had their license more than 1 year.
48. The student is permitted to travel domestically with the HomeStay parents or with VCS sponsored trips. Independent travel, aside from trips directly to and from the home country, is not allowed unless prior approval is granted from the ISPC in writing 48 hours before the trip. Students traveling without HomeStay parents must have a guardian over the age of 25 with them at all times. The cost of independent travel would be the student's responsibility.
49. Visits by the student's family or friends while in the program must be approved by the ISPC before they arrive or travel plans are made. Parents are permitted to visit only once a semester for a short visit, unless otherwise approved by the ISPC. HomeStay families will not be expected to house the student's guests at any time.
50. Travel back to your home country during the school year must be discussed with the ISPC before plans are made and airplane tickets are purchased. Any school days missed due to vacation will be unexcused absence. Teachers are not required to allow missed work to be made up.
51. Students should travel home for Christmas Break for at least 10 consecutive days but no more than the given break allows. Students not returning home for Christmas Break:
 - a. Must get permission from HomeStay family to stay
 - b. Student will be charged \$500 to be paid to the HomeStay family

HomeStay Family Guidelines

Welcome!! We are glad that God led you to Valley Christian Schools and to our VCS HomeStay family program this year. We look forward to getting to know you and helping you to have a successful year in your house and at Valley.

The previous HomeStay section covers rules for **all International Students at VCS**. Additionally, each HomeStay has house rules/guidelines that make the house happy, successful and peaceful. These rules may be different for each HomeStay and also different from what you had before, so you should review them together. You may not like all of the rules, but they are still the rules. You have to live by them while you are here. The rules for the International Student and HomeStay children should be similar to those of the same age. The rules may change or add rules during the year to help you grow in certain ways.

As you live together as a family, following God and learning about him together, we know you will have a great year. American families may not be what you have in your own family. Some of our HomeStays are single parents, some are older with no children, some have none or few children while some have many children, some parents may be of different ethnic backgrounds. There is no typical HomeStay family. Don't feel like you need to compare yours to anyone else's.

Here are important things to know about your American HomeStay families and the way we live:

1. American families like to be together and we welcome you to be part of our family from this day forward. That means loving each other, encouraging each other, and not speaking badly about people. If you are unhappy with anything or anyone, talk to your HomeStay parents about it quickly and it will lead into a good conclusion.

2. You will be a part of a family, not a hotel. In the HomeStay program, you are expected to be part of the family. That means interacting with everyone, being helpful and talking with us about how things are going with you.

3. Being helpful is fun, and each family will expect you to be helpful in their house.

For example:

- volunteer to take people's plates after a meal, or clean the counter of used plates, cups and trash.
- volunteer to unpack the groceries from the car.
- volunteer to help make breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- invite others to be first in whatever we do.

There are all sorts of ways to help. Nothing makes a person more pleasant than being helpful and putting others first. We expect everyone to put others first and be helpful.

4. Everyone is to be thankful and grateful. There is never a reason to be unthankful. If you find your attitude getting bad, think of what you have to be thankful for. It will change your mind.

- Be thankful to be alive.
- Be thankful to have a great family at home and a HomeStay family here in America who loves you.
- Be grateful for your friends.
- Be grateful for Valley Christian Schools.
- Be grateful for the future God has for you, including a good career, an awesome family and plenty of friends.

General HomeStay Guidelines

Here are some general rules to live by for this school year.

Schedules: In a busy family in American culture, it is important to plan ahead and let others know your appointments at least a couple of days ahead of time. As soon as you know of an appointment, meeting or change in schedule, tell your HomeStay parent. They should be given at least 2 days notice for any outing or change in normal scheduled activities. If not enough time to prepare, the answer may have to be "no". They will review the family calendar with everyone every week.

BE ON TIME!! Americans want to always be on time to their appointment, even 5 minutes early is considered being respectful toward others.

Personal belongings: Generally, all personal things should be kept in your room when not in use. This includes books, shoes and so on. Please look around before you go to bed at night and put your personal belongings in your room or the appointed spot in the house.

Keys: Your Homestay will provide you with a key to the house. Be responsible with your house keys. If you lose the key you may have to replace the lock.

Noise: All family members need to be sensitive to the needs of others in the home. The homes are usually quiet between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. weekdays. During these times someone is usually sleeping. This means all electronics should be shut off during quiet times. Weekends may have different quiet times.

Kitchen: You are welcome to use kitchen appliances like the toaster and microwave. Do not cook if you are alone in the house, until you are given permission. Don't cook using the oven or stove without the help of your HomeStay parents. As with everything, if you take something out, put it away. Clean up after yourself. Throw away paper plates, plastic forks, spoons, knives and cups. Rinse dirty dishes and place them in the sink or dishwasher as directed.

Meals: You are responsible to make your own breakfast each day and fix/take a bag lunch for school if you want one. You can also purchase your lunch using your own money at school if you would rather have a hot lunch. Most families try to eat dinner together as a family as much as possible. After each meal, everyone who eats can clean up after themselves.

Food: Let your HomeStay know what you enjoy eating and they will try to incorporate some of your favorites in the menu, but in general they will be eating what they normally do. You are welcome to help yourself to anything in the fridge or pantry, but be responsible — don't ruin your appetite for regular meals or eat all of something that everybody wants. Also, don't waste food. Only take a small amount of food or drink, and then go back for more if you want.

No food in the bedrooms! Eat in the kitchen and dining area only. If you have food you don't want others to eat, ask for a special box or shelf to keep it on.

Privacy: Bedrooms are private places for sleeping, resting and enjoying quiet time. HomeStay children are not allowed into your bedroom, and you are not allowed to go in theirs. This gives everyone a private place they can go to.

VCS encourages the HomeStay to have an open door policy on bedrooms. Especially if computers are allowed in the rooms, your door should remain open at all times except when sleeping. Spending too much time in your room is considered rude and a sign of unhappiness in American culture. Have a good balance between interacting and being alone.

Bathroom:

- A daily shower is common. Daily shaving is expected for men. Most people use deodorant because the smell of body odor is not acceptable in American culture. They brush and floss their teeth every morning and evening and sometimes after every meal. Those with a tendency towards bad breath use mouthwash.
- Bathroom floors do not have drains. Keep the water in the sink and in the bathtub. Place the shower curtain inside the bathtub when showering. Dry off inside the tub before getting out.
- Generally, a shower should last no longer than 10 minutes. Late night showers, although common in some other countries, should be avoided because it is considered impolite to awaken someone with noise from the running water. Be sure to shower before 10pm.
- In America, water from a bath is not shared between people. Empty the tub when finished.
- Remove all loose hair from the bottom of the sink or the tub before leaving the bathroom so as not to clog the drain. Put it in a wastebasket. Do not remove the drain stopper from the sink or tub.
- Every person in the family home shares in the duty of cleaning up. When you use the bathroom, make sure that you clean up after yourself. Wipe up water spills, hang towels, and wash out the sink and shower/tub.
- Clothing should not give off unpleasant smells. Change your clothes daily, especially when they may smell of perspiration. Wash the clothes you wear each week.
- In America, you use toilet tissue to cleanse after using the toilet. The tissue is thrown into the toilet and flushed. Do not put used, soiled toilet tissue in the trashcan. Flush it down the toilet. Body waste and toilet tissue are the only things that should be flushed down the toilet.
- Women use either tampons or sanitary napkins for menstruation. Wrap these in toilet tissue and then throw these away in a garbage can after use – do not flush them down the toilet as this will damage the plumbing and you may be held responsible for any repairs.
- Basic hygiene products will be provided by the HomeStay family. Special needs or wants will be your responsibility.
- Have your HomeStay family show you how to shut off the water to the toilet. If the toilet becomes clogged, this will prevent it from overflowing and will avoid a mess.

Laundry: Put dirty laundry in your provided hamper. You will probably be responsible for washing, hanging and putting away your own folded, clean clothes. Bed sheets and pillowcases can be washed every other week or so. Do not use the washing machine or dryer by yourself until your HomeStay has given you permission. Be courteous to others in the house and move your laundry from washer to dryer and out of the dryer in a timely manner.

Chores: You may be assigned daily or weekly chores with HomeStay children— cleaning the kitchen, sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting, taking out the trash, etc. This usually takes 5-20 minutes each day. Do your daily chores as all members of the family take part in chores.

Bedroom cleanliness: Make your bed daily and keep your room picked up. Part of your chores are emptying your trash, making sure everything is off the floor, dusting and vacuuming your own

bedroom. Discuss with your HomeStay what can be put on the bedroom walls and how to attach items when decorating your personal space.

Friends: Friends are welcome to visit. Talk to your HomeStay parents about it first. Be courteous and introduce your guests to anyone in the house, starting with the parents as Mr. and Mrs. Absolutely no overnight guests without prior permission. Students should ask for permission before going out or making plans with friends. Be sure detailed information is provided to your HomeStay as to where you are going, how you can be reached, phone numbers and when you will be back.

Speaking English: One of the main benefits of attending Valley Christian is to learn and improve your English. We expect English to be spoken in your HomeStay at all times. You can speak another language when talking with your family or studying for language class (like Spanish). Most Americans feel it is rude to speak another language around people who don't understand it. If you need to ask a question in your language, explain and ask permission why first, then go ahead.

Cell phones: The student will need to purchase his or her own phone plan and not be added to the HomeStay's current family plan. This usually requires an unlocked phone to be purchased which is an additional cost. (For example, if a student wishes to purchase an i-phone, he/she will need to purchase an unlocked phone for approximately \$900 and pay a month-to-month fee)

Telephone etiquette: If you need to speak on the phone for more than a few minutes, go in the back yard or out front or another room so others don't have to listen to your conversation. Bringing your cell phone to table while eating is not appropriate. You should leave it in your room until after your meal is over. This applies to eating out also. You should be able to enjoy the people in front of you for 15 – 30 minutes without the distraction of your phone.

Church: You will attend weekly church services with your HomeStay family. This is not optional. Part of your contract to attend VCS is to attend church weekly. Make sure you know what time you will leave the house and how long you will stay. Be sure you are dressed appropriately and ready to go on time. During church your phone should be on silent and not be seen.

Transportation: VCS classes start at 8:15am every weekday. Be ready and dressed in uniform in plenty of time to get to school whether you ride the school bus, walk, or driven by your HomeStay. Bus transportation is provided by VCS to school and home from school and the cost is included in the International Student Fees. Your HomeStay will familiarize you with the bus route. The VCS bus service is not a way to get elsewhere after school like the mall, library, friend's house, tutor, etc. This is for your HomeStay to provide transportation as part of their agreement. Be sure to have a list of emergency contact numbers in case you miss your bus. There is only one drop off and one pick-up per day. If you miss your bus, you must make other arrangements.

Be sure to let your HomeStay know ahead of time if you need a ride somewhere special. Be courteous and always on-time for them to pick you up. Do not expect your HomeStay to always drive you. Try to get carpools from others if you are going out in a group. Don't rely on just one parent to always drive.

Location/Safety: Your HomeStay is expected by VCS to know where you are at all times. You must have your cell phone with you any time you are out of the house.

Your HomeStay family is encouraged to participate in school activities, especially the Back-to-School night in the fall, and watching your sporting events or music concerts in place of your parents. Making

contact with other International Students and their HomeStay families in your area is a great way to find carpools and friends for students. A roster of all HomeStay families and their contact information is available by request.

Illness/Medicine: It is important to let your HomeStay know about any illness or physical symptoms. If you do not feel well during school hours, you may visit the campus office staff. If you do not feel well while at home, let us know. Tell us about any medication you may be taking. If you are sick and miss school make sure your HomeStay calls the Attendance Hotline to let VCS you will not be at school.

High School Attendance Hotline (562) 865-0281 x400

Middle School Attendance Hotline (562) 865-6519

Student Finances: Each student will have their own spending money. VCS recommends that students arrive with a credit/debit card already set up with a corresponding bank from your home country. You should not share bank account with anyone else. Students and HomeStay families should not borrow money from each other. Money misunderstandings can create distrust in student/family relationships. The student is responsible for all personal expenses including:

- Entertainment: Movies, snacks, sports events, restaurants, etc. that they participate without the HomeStay family
- Travel and Excursions: Any cost associated with personal travel activities.
- Personal Items: shampoo, makeup, deodorant, etc.
- Clothing: All clothing including winter jackets, school uniforms.
- All school expenses: Including books, class fees, sports and special events (this can be paid by the Student's Activity Fund at VCS)
- Cell Phones

It is recommended that HomeStay families do treat the student to an evening or a weekend day out and host them about once a month.

HomeStay Family Roles

Your HomeStay family will most likely be the first people you meet when they meet you at Los Angeles Airport (LAX) when you first arrive. They will also be responsible to get you back to LAX at the end of the school year.

The following are the roles of your HomeStay, along with the rules and guidelines already listed.

They will:

- go over above rules and guidelines with you provided in the International Student Handbook and the campus handbook.
- monitor your grades and assignments on Powerschool.
- participate in school activities in place of the parents, especially the Back-to-School night in the fall as well as sports, dramas, or other school activities you are involved in.
- stay in contact with the ISPC and HomeStay coordinator for all questions or concerns regarding your stay.
- provide their address and contact information to the Department of Homeland Security for the purpose of tracking the student. Students are not allowed to move WITHOUT notifying the ISPC.
- provide the student with a key to the house. Lost keys must be replaced and paid for by the student. This may include paying for changing locks also.
- make sure the student has a ride to and from school everyday and that they are not late to school or allowed to excessive absences.
- encourage students to speak English and be a part of family activities.
- ensure that the student is not required to babysit younger family members.
- provide the student a room with a closing door, a complete bed with linens, desk, chair, a window, and a closet.
- provide Internet service.
- provide 3 meals a day, seven days a week for the duration of the school year.
- provide laundry facilities and supplies.
- provide adequate heat, light and ventilation. (Most homes in Southern California do not have or need air conditioning)
- provide transportation to appointments, school events, church, and other places within reason.
- assist the student in setting up cell phone service when they arrive. HomeStay families do not co-sign or add students to their existing accounts.
- attend church services with student every week. Allow student to see the family living out their faith. Help with Bible homework, answer questions, and openly discuss religious beliefs.
- not allow any student to be left home alone overnight without an adult over the age of 25 supervising; as well as notifying ISPC when this occurs.
- not charge the student for reasonable "extras" (food, transportation, family outings). HomeStay families are paid a stipend from VCS and this will cover all expenses.
- notify the ISPC of any family changes including people moving in or out of the home.
- allow the ISPC or any VCS administrator to inspect the HomeStay prior to placement and during the year for routine home visits, announced or unannounced.

MISCONCEPTIONS Some common misconceptions (things that are not true) include:

- ❑ **Misconception #1: In the U.S., everyone is glamorous and rich - just like in the Hollywood movies.** This is true: You will probably be living an ordinary life with a family that is neither rich nor poor. They probably, for example, won't have a maid to look after your needs.
- ❑ **Misconception #2: American families are all white and headed by a mother and father.** This is true: America is quite multicultural (from many ethnic backgrounds), and the nature of families is varied.
- ❑ **Misconception #3: Your host family will dote on you, with the mother devoting much of her day to making your life easier.** This is true: family members will cherish their time with you, but they have their own lives to lead.
- ❑ **Misconception #4: Your host family house will be like a hotel.** This is true: you may have your own room, but most likely you will be sharing all of the other facilities.
- ❑ **Misconception #5: Meals will be like in a restaurant; you will have a large breakfast with convenient choices, several options for lunch, and a full course dinner with soup and dessert.** This is true: meals tend to be hurried and informal.
- ❑ **Misconception #6: You will be the only international student in the household.** This is true: sometimes more than one student will be living with your host family. In some cases, they will be from another country. That can be an advantage, since it gives you somebody to share your experiences with.
- ❑ **Misconception #7: You will be able to speak English like a native after a short time in your host family.** This is true: English is a very complex language and speaking it well takes considerable time. However, you will improve your English dramatically by staying with an English-speaking family.

What happens after you are accepted?

1. An acceptance letter and Enrollment Information will be emailed to the student or agent.
2. After the Enrollment Forms are received back along with full tuition payment, the I-20 will be express mailed to the address provided by the student. The student presents the I-20 to his/her local U.S. Embassy for permission to attend VCS on an F-1 visa. If the visa is denied, all but the \$500.00 application fee will be refunded upon Valley Christian's receipt of the original denial letter from the U.S. Embassy stating the reason for denial, and the return of the original I-20.
3. HomeStay Family information will be provided to the student approximately 1 month before arrival. If the student has their own HomeStay family, they must be approved and a home visit made before I-20 is issued.
4. All new International Students to the High School are required to attend Summer English Institute beginning on July 28, 2019. Cost of this program is included in the tuition.
4. Along with the assistance of the ISPC a schedule of classes will be prepared for the student based on their interests. Math placement test will be given to all new students during the International Student Orientation.
5. All International Students start each year with a Student Activity Fund of \$1,500 for the school year, which is included in the fees paid. This can be used to purchase uniforms, schoolbooks, field trips, or other items for school.
6. All new International Students will be issued an iPad and insurance included in the price of the first year's tuition.
7. The student should arrive to the Cerritos area no later than 3 days before the start of classes.
8. Any student using a 3rd party agent, VCS will recognize them as your agent as long as you attend VCS or your agent lets us know otherwise.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why am I considered an International Student?

If at least one of these statements are true, you will be considered an International Student:

- If this is your first year studying in the United States
- If you are a student whose primary address is currently outside the United States
- If you need an I-20 (F-1 Student Visa)

All students must remain with an International Student status for a minimum of 2 years while at VCS. Any change in immigration status must be reported in writing to the International Student Program Coordinator by April 1 for consideration of change in status.

How do I apply to be a student or to become a HomeStay family?

Applications are available at our website at <http://www.vcschools.org/international> or from the International Student Program Office located in the High School office.

When is my application due? Completed applications, along with a \$500 USD application fee, must be received no later than March 31 for the current school year. Applications received after this date, will be placed in our Wait Pool and considered on a “best fit for space available” basis.

Does Valley Christian offer tuition assistance for international students?

Valley Christian does not offer tuition assistance for international students nor does it offer merit scholarships.

Will Valley Christian provide a guardian or arrange for HomeStays for international students? Valley Christian does place the students with a HomeStay Family on a 10-month stay. Students may live with parent or immediate family member who are legally allowed to live in the USA. All other students must use the HomeStay placements made by VCS.

Who are the primary contacts for international admissions?

Angela Garris

International Student Program Coordinator
(ISPC)
17700 Dumont Ave. Cerritos, CA 90703
562-865-0281 x228
agarris@vcschools.org

Onnie Bomgaars

Tuition Specialist
10818 Artesia Blvd. Cerritos, CA 90703
562-860-0556 x244
obomgaars@vcschools.org

Helen Yu

International Student Program HomeStay
Coordinator
562-865-0281 x270
hyu@vcschools.org

IMMIGRATION AND VISA INFORMATION

General Information

When you come to Valley Christian Schools (VCS) to study, you are responsible for following the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services rules and regulations during your time in the United States. You can access this information at www.USCIS.gov. Because these laws are complicated and ever-changing, it's important for you to educate yourself about the basics of immigration. The following sections will introduce you to the various forms, documents, and processes related to being an international student in America.

Passport In order to travel to the United States you must have a valid passport from your home country. You must make sure that your passport is always valid at least 6 months ahead of time.

U.S. Visa You must also apply for a visa to allow you to enter the United States. You will be applying for the F-1 Student Visa. You should visit a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country or surrounding area in order to acquire this visa. You will have to schedule a visa interview where you will need to present the following materials:

- your Immigration I-20 A-B form
- your passport
- Notice of Action I-797C (receipt from SEVIS fee)
- documents proving financial support
- materials proving ties to your home country (indicating that you intend to return after your study at VCS)

SEVIS Immigration I-20 A-B Form

The I-20 process begins after you are accepted to VCS. Angela Garris will send you the Immigration I-20 A-B form by FedEx. **It is very important for you to keep this form safe!** After you receive the form, you should apply for the SEVIS I-901 fee that is necessary for your visa to the States. You can pay this fee online and you will receive both an electronic receipt and a hard copy of the receipt in the mail (this is called a Notice of Action I-797C).

When you have both your I-20 A-B form and Notice of Action receipt, you may schedule a visa interview with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. After you have received your F-1 Student visa, you should keep your I-20 safe with your other documents. It is essential that you have this when you enter the United States because you will need to present this document to the U.S. Immigration Officer. Your I-20 will be stamped when you enter the country.

Your I-20 form must be signed yearly to confirm that you are maintaining your F-1 status by studying full-time at VCS. If you intend to leave the United States at any time during your time at VCS (breaks, summer, other trips), you **MUST** check your Immigration I-20 A-B form to see if the last signature is still valid within the 12 month time frame. If it needs to be signed, you **MUST** bring the Immigration I-20 A-B form to the ISPC at least 10 days before you leave so that it can be signed.

I-94 Card

The I-94 is a white arrival/departure card that is completed as you enter the U.S. This card records your date of entry, indicates what kind of visa you have, and shows when you must leave the United States.

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

Keep your passport valid at all times Attend VCS full-time during fall and spring semesters Do not work without proper authorization. Adhere to all federal laws regarding international student immigration requirements

ARRIVAL TO VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

When you buy your ticket, you should plan to fly into Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). LAX airport is about a 30-minute drive to VCS. Your new HomeStay family will pick you up at LAX. Your HomeStay will vary on distance. Please contact Angela Garris if you have questions concerning flights or arrival. Students may not arrive in the USA prior to 30 before the first day of school. Students arriving more than 5 days before that first day of school may incur additional housing fees at \$50 per day.

What to Bring

Since you will likely be bringing all of your belongings in only a few suitcases, you will need to make decisions about what to bring from home and what to buy when you get to California. You will be able to find any items you need as personal hygiene items and materials for your schoolwork with your HomeStay family as Cerritos has many shopping places.

Here are some items you may want to pack:

- Passport, I-20, other important immigration documents
- Bank or ATM card
- Glasses or contacts if you need them
- Umbrella
- Computer, if you have one
- Musical instrument, if you play one (this can be rented nearby)
- Photos of friends and family
- If you bring small electrical items from your own country, you should bring an adapter plug. U.S. electrical current is 110-115, 60-cycle AC
- Personal hygiene products
- Casual clothing for summer and winter

Your HomeStay family will provide these items:

- A bedroom with a closing door and at least 1 window. Your bedroom will not be in an open area such as a family room or furnished basement.
- Bed
- Sheets, blankets, and pillows for the bed
- Bath towels
- Desk, chair, and lamp
- Closet and additional dresser if necessary
- Basic toiletries such as laundry detergent, toothpaste, soap, toilet paper, etc.

ACADEMICS

The American Academic System

Your experience in a classroom in America may be very different from the learning environment in your home country. Despite the differences, your teachers will be caring and willing to help you, so be sure to take advantage of the opportunities you have with tutoring, study groups, and meeting with your

teachers. There are two significant differences between the American educational system and many others. First, American teachers value critical thinking. It will not be enough for you to memorize the professor's lecture and then repeat it on the test. Your course work will guide you to understand the issues, engage the concept, and apply your knowledge to other situations. This may be a significant difference for you, but with time you will find that you can begin to adjust to this new paradigm for learning. Second, discussion and argumentation are very important elements of the educational system in America. You may find that your classmates readily disagree with your teacher's opinions at times. While it is always important to be polite and respectful, your teacher will likely encourage discussion and debate. The manner in which you express your viewpoint is important, however. Show respect by acknowledging the professor or classmates' point of view and then offer your opinion. Say, "In my opinion..." or "I think..." or "I feel..." or "I believe..." This discussion is an important opportunity for you to continue learning and thinking through new information. Do not be afraid to speak up in class and voice your opinion. Your teacher will also expect you to be able to formulate an argument in your essays that you support with facts and examples. It is also important to remember that Americans are very concerned about time, and that being late is seen as a sign of rudeness, especially consistently arriving late for class. Anytime you are late, you will be marked tardy. Too many tardies will result in a discipline.

Tips for Academic Adjustment and Success

- Teachers prefer it if students discuss ideas rather than just sit and listen.
- If you do not understand, ask. If you are not yet use to asking questions in class, speak to your teacher after class or after school.
- At the start of each semester you will be handed a syllabus for each course. This is an outline of the course objectives, due dates for assignments and more. Keep the syllabus for the duration of the course and refer to it if you are not sure about assignment requirements. Pay close attention when the teacher discusses the syllabus, as he/she will often explain during this time how grades will be determined.
- Do not try to write down everything in class.

Academic and Guidance Counselor

Your academic and guidance counselor will help you plan and schedule your courses at VCS as well as the ISPC. In addition to helping you register for classes, your counselor is also there to talk with you about your interests, goals, and sense of calling. When you have questions about scheduling, you should talk with your counselor.

The VCS Library

The library has books, computers, and study areas available for you in your academic work. Additionally, the library is a comfortable place to be with a great atmosphere. The librarians are always happy to answer your questions. Check your campus for the hours the library is open. See your campus Student Handbook for additional rules and guidelines for using the libraries.

Student ID Cards

All students must get a free Student Identification (ID) card. These photo ID cards serves multiple purposes:

1. It serves as proof that you are an VCS student.
2. It gives you access to all home sporting games for free.

3. It can get you access for the public library in Cerritos.
4. Show it at movie theaters or other places to obtain student discounts.

Adding, Dropping or Withdrawing Classes

You cannot add or drop classes without notifying your counselor to make sure that you can make the changes and still be legal and/or on track. Consult the VCS Academic calendar for the last day to add or drop classes. Withdrawing from classes, like as with adding and dropping classes, you cannot withdraw from a class without notifying your counselor to make sure that you can make the changes and still be legal.

Academic Integrity

VCS students are expected to do their own, independent work, and to refrain from plagiarizing the work of others. When drawing from various resources for research purposes students must provide citations and bibliographic information. (If you do not know how to correctly cite sources, speak to your English teacher for help.) Students may not use an editor for any work turned in under their own name unless approved in advance in writing by the instructor, and only to the extent approved. During exams be sure to only use pencil and plain paper or a printed answer sheet (ScanTron). No books, notes, calculators, phones, electronic organizers and other electronic gadgets are allowed during an exam except if the instructor has indicated differently. Papers need to be created by you except if you work in a group. Furthermore, do not hand in the same paper twice. It can sometimes be appealing to fabricate findings or sources, however this not allowed.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty may automatically receive an F on their assignment and may be in jeopardy of further disciplines. Dishonesty is reported to the principle.

Campus Policies

Student Standards of Conduct

- For a complete list of Student Standards of Conduct, refer to your campus Student Handbook.
- Because the safety and well being of the community may be at risk, students who break the law, either on or off campus, will be subject to investigation and discipline action.
- Students who possess, distribute, and/or use alcohol, narcotics, or other intoxicants on school premises or at VCS-sponsored activities will be subject to discipline action.
- Students present on campus while under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol are subject to judicial action even if their consumption was off campus.
- In the interest of common health concerns, the campus provides a tobacco-free environment. Use of any form of tobacco on school premises or on the property of your HomeStay is strictly prohibited.
- All gambling on the VCS property is strictly prohibited.
- Slander and profane language, physical or violent verbal abuse of any person on VCS property or at functions sponsored by VCS will not be tolerated and will result in discipline action.
- Harassment or intimidation of another student, faculty, or HomeStay family member or the threat of physical or emotional harm will not be tolerated.
- Lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct on VCS property or HomeStay will not be tolerated and will result in discipline action. This includes possession or display of pornographic material in any form.

- Theft, damage, or vandalism of VCS, public or private property will result in discipline action.
- Unauthorized entry and misuse of VCS facilities or property, including the unauthorized use of computers, telephones, or other VCS equipment will result in discipline action.
- Possession of any type of firearm—including BB or pellet guns, paint guns, any copy of a gun or any counterfeit firearm, switchblades, bows and arrows, explosive devices, martial arts weapons, fireworks and/or other weapons considered illegal or dangerous—on VCS or HomeStay property will result in discipline action.
- The illegal use or possession of, or tampering with safety equipment such as fire alarms, smoke detectors etc. on university premises is illegal and will result in discipline action.
- Software piracy is a theft and VCS does not condone or tolerate the unauthorized copying of licensed computer software. The unauthorized duplication or other piracy of software is a violation of federal law, and may expose the individual and the VCS to legal processes.

HEALTH INSURANCE

In the United States, the cost of health care is the responsibility of the individual and not the government. Health Care in the United States is among the best in the world, it is also very expensive. For this reason, all international students are required to have health insurance while attending Valley Christian Schools. There are many different types of health insurance policies available, the policies vary in cost as well as what they cover. VCS has contracted with an insurance provider to provide a cost effective insurance plan that meets the needs of most international students. In an effort to protect you from plans that do not provide sufficient coverage, VCS will purchase the plan and make available the coverage when you arrive to school.

As important as it is to have health insurance in the United States, it is also important to realize that health insurance will not cover all of your medical expenses. Health insurance will make health care more affordable, but not free. Health insurance does not cover dental care, vision care or the cost of immunizations. Be sure that you have money available for health needs that are not covered by insurance.

Chapel

Students, faculty, and staff come together each Wednesday morning to worship God together and to reflect as a Christian community on contemporary issues. These worship times include singing, prayer and reflections on Scripture. Chapel participation is required for all students and faculty.

Holidays

There are many holidays in the United States. Although, banks and offices may be closed on certain public holidays, it does not mean that you do not have class on those days. If you're not sure if you have class, consult the online calendar.

December 31/January 1: New Year's Eve/New Year's Day

New Year's Eve is usually a special night of festivities. Many people attend parties. At midnight, it is customary to kiss or embrace friends. New Year's is often spent with family or friends.

Third Monday in January: Martin Luther King Junior's Birthday Day.

Martin Luther King was a civil rights leader who is remembered for his dedication and work toward civil rights during the 1960's.

February 14: Valentine's Day

It is customary on this day to send friends and "special friends" valentine cards, candy, or flowers.

Second Monday in February: President's Day

This day has been set aside to commemorate the birthdays of two important U.S. presidents: George Washington, who was the first president of the United States, and Abraham Lincoln, who was the 16th president and very popular for his leadership during the Civil War.

March 17: St. Patrick's Day

Named for the patron saint of Ireland, this day is often celebrated with parades and parties. Many people wear green clothing and put up decorations. If you do not wear green on this day, you may get pinched.

Springtime (date varies): Easter Sunday

This is a Christian holiday, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is customary for people to decorate Easter eggs.

April 1: April Fools Day

This day has no real meaning other than provide people to play jokes on each other.

Second Sunday in May: Mother's Day

Americans honor mothers on this day with greeting cards, flowers, and gifts.

Last Monday in May: Memorial Day

This was established to pay tribute to all members of U.S. Military who died in the service of the USA.

Third Sunday in June: Father's Day

Fathers are honored on this day with greeting cards and gifts.

July 4: Independence Day

On this day in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. Many people and businesses fly the American flag, on this day, which is celebrated with parades and fireworks.

First Monday in September: Labor Day

Labor Day was established to recognize people who work, and the importance of labor in our society. It is also seen as the end of summer.

October 31: Halloween

There are a number of theories on the origin of Halloween. People often celebrate this holiday by wearing costumes and carving faces into pumpkins. Children dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating.

November 11: Veteran's Day

This holiday honors American veterans of foreign wars.

Fourth Thursday in November: Thanksgiving Day

One of the most popular holidays of the year. It is a time to be thankful to God for all the good things in life. The holiday is based on a celebration that took place in 1621, where Pilgrims and Indians gave thanks for a good harvest. Thanksgiving dinner usually includes turkey, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie.

December 24/December 25: Christmas Eve/Christmas Day

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on this day. People often decorate their houses and exchange gifts with family and friends.