

# Hoover City Schools International Exchange Student Procedure

*Revised March 2013*

Hoover City Schools is pleased to consider the acceptance of international exchange students from around the world in its high schools. These programs can be mutually beneficial for both the exchange student and for our local community of learners. It is important to note that public schools in Alabama are not required to accept international exchange students. The district will continue to offer this opportunity as long as the exchange program does not introduce disruption to the normal operation of schools. This procedure applies to all international exchange students who enter Hoover High School or Spain Park High School.

1. The following eligibility criteria apply to candidate exchange students:
  - a. The student must be at least 16 and not more than 18 years of age during the academic year in which they would be enrolled.
  - b. The student must have a good academic record and have at least two written recommendations from current teachers.
  - c. The student must be fluent in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the English language.
  - d. The student must have a strong desire to learn about our culture and to share their culture with our community in a positive manner.
  
2. The following eligibility criteria apply to candidate host families:
  - a. The host family must reside within the city limits of Hoover.
  - b. The host family must work under the approval and supervision of an exchange agency that is approved by the U. S. State Department.
  - c. The host family must have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as decision makers for the student.
  - d. The host family must have the legal authority to make medical decisions on behalf of the student in emergency situations.
  - e. The host family must be willing and able to pay the same fees that would be normally paid by parents in the schools.
  
3. The candidate host family and its exchange agency representative must provide a written request for a student to be considered for acceptance no later than the first school day in April of any given year for the next school year. The letter should be addressed to the assistant superintendent of instruction. Within two weeks of the submission deadline, candidate host families will be notified in writing as to whether they will be invited to an interview. The written request must include the following elements:
  - a. *From the candidate host family-* A written explanation from the host family explaining why they wish to serve in this role
  - b. *From the exchange agency-* A copy of the student's academic transcript in English and a letter written by the student explaining what they hope to accomplish by this experience if they are selected

4. Interviews will be scheduled no later than the last school day in April for any given academic year. An interview date and individual time assignments will be provided to select candidate host families and exchange students (separate times for host families and students). The interview panel will be chaired by the assistant superintendent of instruction and will include at least one counselor or administrator from each high school. Host families will attend the interview with their agency representative. A Skype handle and phone number will be provided for candidate students to use so that they can participate in a separate conversation from the host family. Candidate host families and exchange agency representative will be notified in writing within two weeks following the interview whether specific candidate students will be accepted for enrollment.
5. Enrollment will be limited each year to a maximum of four (4) exchange students at Hoover High School and two (2) exchange students at Spain Park High School. This is a maximum limit and does not represent a quota that must be filled on an annual basis.
6. The assistant superintendent of instruction will make the decision regarding placement in consultation with school representatives who will review the written requests and participate in the interview panel. The decision of the assistant superintendent of instruction will be final.
7. Exchange students who are accepted for enrollment will be placed in courses appropriate for students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
8. Once approved exchange students are enrolled, the school will communicate directly with the host family in matters regarding disciplinary or academic concerns. Exchange students will be subject to the same disciplinary consequences of misbehavior as any other student up to and including suspension and expulsion.
9. Hoover City Schools will not consider the acceptance of exchange students on an emergency basis or by any other means than this procedure.