

# Summit Christian Academy

## Guide to Exchange Student Admittance



All parents, students, and a Host Family must read and understand all of Summit Christian Academy (SCA) Handbook and Exchange Student Policies. By signing the enrollment documents, families are agreeing to the standards and rules detailed in the SCA Handbook as well as the guidelines in this document. *(If needed, you must have the documents translated).*

Prior to leaving the home country for Summit Christian Academy, 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.

Students must follow all policies outlined in SCA Handbook and Exchange Students Policies.

Summit Christian Academy is an English speaking campus. Please read more about SCA families on our web: <http://www.scaspokane.com> English is to be spoken on campus during school hours and all school activities. The student must make a concerted effort to continually improve his or her ability in the English language.

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 Summit Christian Academy'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. Exchange Student tuition and fees are non-refundable regardless of attendance.

Students must provide funds for medical insurance, which will be purchased on their behalf by Summit Christian Academy.

The student and his or her parents must communicate with the Exchange Student Program Coordinator prior to the student's departure from the home country. Students may not arrive in the USA prior to 30 days before the first day of school. Students arriving more than 5 days before that first day of school may incur additional housing fees at \$25 per day.

SCA reserves the right to terminate a student's participation in the Exchange Student program if his or her conduct is considered detrimental or incompatible with the interests of SCA. In this case, all fees paid will be non-refundable and the student's I-20 will be cancelled.

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.

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. The Host Family will not provide housing during summer break. Also, the Host Family is not required to keep your room for you during the summer months. Students need to pack all their belongings they are leaving for the summer and make storage plans.

If a student wants to stay for the summer break, they must make arrangements with the Exchange Student program coordinator in writing with their plans for the summer months. Your school year Host Family is not required to allow you to live with them during the summer.

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 Host Family is available (and has applied by May 15) for the student for the following year, and full tuition for the following year has been received by the SCA Business Office. All decisions about the following year must be in place by May 15 or your spot at SCA can be given to a new student on our waiting list.

Parents, students and/or agents must communicate directly with the Exchange Student program coordinator for any and all official business regarding their student.

Students and families agree to support the Summit Christian Academy staff in its goals, procedures and discipline policies and understand that SCA is a private institution and reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any student who does not abide by SCA standards and requirements.

## **SCHOOL LIFE**

A diploma and graduation are not guaranteed for any student (the student should consult his or her guidance counselor about the requirements for graduation.)

The student must make an effort to get involved in SCA by attending and participating in school activities, sports, and/or clubs. The student should not spend all his or her time with other exchange students and should seek guidance from Host Family parents and school personnel when choosing friends.

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 2.0 average and/or a D or F grade on a progress report, the Host Family and/or Exchange Students coordinator may require additional study hours, tutor, and limit co-curricular and weekend activities until the grade is improved.

Students are expected to attend school every day. At 10 absences in any class, the student may be dropped from class, which can affect their F-1 visa status and could be dismissed from SCA. In order to prevent this, a meeting with the Host Family parent and Exchange Student Coordinator or school principal will be made after 8 absences and/or a teleconference or Skype may be made with the parents. *(An interpreter will be provided if needed).*

Exchange Students that travel home for Christmas Break and need to take additional days for travel **MUST** provide the Exchange Student Coordinator a copy of airline tickets with the dates of travel. This must be done by December 10th in order to have the absences excused. These absences are still counted in the 10 allowed per year.

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 **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 SCA.**

All students must abstain from all sexual activity. Any romantic involvement or dating is discouraged. Exchange students may not take any action that may change the nature of his or her life (e.g., become engaged or married).

All students must dress in the contracted school uniforms during the regular school day which begins at 8:10 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. Information will be provided to you upon acceptance to SCA.

A consent form will need to be completed to authorize SCA 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.

It is important for each student to develop a living and learning style that is consistent with the Christian beliefs of the SCA community. These standards help to create an environment that is respectful of individual rights and freedoms; one where all are free to pursue academic excellence; and one that brings glory to God. If a student does not follow SCA's standards of conduct, he or she will face the consequences outlined in the Parent/Student hand book. Each student is expected to assume responsibility for his/her actions at all times and to cooperate fully with any safety officer on campus. SCA strives to be fair and respect each individual in matters of campus safety.

New High School students must attend Exchange Student Orientation that is scheduled prior the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. More information on the orientation will be sent after acceptance.

## **HOST FAMILY**

SCA will appoint and/or approve Host Families for all exchange students that will be accepted in grades th-12th. 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 Host Family coordinator and SCA administration.

Host Family must meet SCA 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 the Host Family and participate with their youth group minimum once a week.

Host Family parents will need to complete the 15 hours of volunteer hours to Summit Christian Academy in place of the biological parents.

If possible, SCA will attempt to provide a Host Family within 10 miles of the SCA campus. SCA will run the background check for all Host Family members over the age of 18. The Host Family will need to sign the SCA agreement documents. *(Required by the US State Department/Department of Justice).*

The Host Family assignment is for one academic year. No new placements will be made during the year except for extreme emergencies. If both parties agree, students may stay with the family for more than one year. Some students will be the only Exchange student in a Host Family while others might have a roommate. If a

student requests a different Host Family for the same school year, an additional \$1,000.00 Host Family placement fee will be assessed.

Host Family placements and addresses are registered with the Department of Homeland Security for purposes of tracking exchange students. Students are not allowed to move without notifying and receiving permission from the Exchange Student Coordinator.

The student will become an integral part of the Host Family, assuming duties and responsibilities considered customary for a child of his/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, Host Family will not ask for more money from the student for additional food costs, transportation, family outings or anything that they would not charge their own children.

By enrolling in SCA, you are agreeing to be responsible for any loss or damage to SCA school property or at the Host Family house that your student may cause.

Problems that arise in the Host Family are to be resolved first through discussion with the Host Family, then with the assistance of the Exchange Students coordinator or SCA counselor. The student and/or Host Family are 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 Exchange Student Coordinator or their counselor.

A personal cell phone must be provided to each Exchange Student by his or her parents. The Host Family will assist in getting one if needed. The student will provide the Exchange Student Coordinator with their cell phone number. Students may bring their own computer. The Host Family residence will provide Internet access. The Host Family will have access to any information on the student's computer at all times and may install internet filtering software to the computer. The Host Family 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 interactions. 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.

The student may not operate a motorized vehicle including the Host Family's vehicle or any friend's vehicle. Nor will the student get his/her driver license before turning 18. When the student is 18 years old, they may petition the Exchange Student Coordinator for permission to obtain a license. If permission is granted student's family must provide SCA with some additional funds to be added to Student's account for emergencies, proof of automobile insurance, copy of driver's license and auto registration.

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.

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. These expenses can be paid for by the student's account that they have with SCA or additional funds sent to the student during the school year by his or her parents.

Bus fees are covered by the Exchange Student fees. Summit Christian Academy buss is for transportation to and from the Host Family and school. The Host Family parents are to provide transportation to all other school activities, tutors, study groups, etc. Exchange students may not ride in a car with another student who does not have a legal right to transport passengers. This is any driver under the age of 18 who did not have his or her license for more than one year.

The student is permitted to travel domestically with the Host Family parents or with SCA sponsored trips. Independent travel, aside from trips directly to and from the home country, is not allowed unless prior approval is granted from the Exchange Student Coordinator. The cost of independent travel would be the student's responsibility.

Visits by the student's family or friends while in the program must be approved by the Exchange Student Coordinator 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 Exchange Student Coordinator. Host Families will not be expected to house the student's guests at any time. Student is still expected to stay with the Host Family and not with visiting guests.

Travel back to you home country during the school year must be discussed with the Exchange Student Coordinator before plans are made and airplane tickets are purchased.

#### **A Welcome Word from our Host Families:**

We are glad that God led you to Summit Christian Academy and to our SCA Host Family this year. We look forward to getting to know you and helping you to have a successful year in our house.

The previous Host Family section covers rules for all Exchange Student at SCA. Additionally, each Host Family has house rules/guidelines that make the house happy, successful and peaceful. These rules may be different for each Host Family 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 Exchange Student and Host Family 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 Host Families are single parents, some have none or few children while some have many children, some parents may be of different ethnic backgrounds. There is no typical Host Family. Don't feel like you need to compare yours to anyone else's.

Here are important things to know about your American Host Family families and the way we live: 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, not speaking badly about people and pretty much always having a good attitude.

We do not allow division or on-going conflict in the house. "Division" is when people don't like to be together. We want everyone to feel respected and accepted by everyone else. Conflict or disagreements must be resolved quickly and with humility.

If you are unhappy with anything or anyone, talk to your Host Family parents about it quickly and it will lead into a good conclusion. We will never make you feel embarrassed and we will not be angry with you. Your most important job is to learn to enjoy every person who lives here, because each one of us is valuable and important to God. We will do the same for you.

You will be a part of a family, not a hotel. In the Host Family, 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.

The Host Family program is designed to shape your character — the inside part of you that makes you strong and confident. That happens through interaction and relationship. We look forward to helping you this way and look forward to spending time with each of you.

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.

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 Host Family here in America who loves you.
- Be grateful for your friends.
- Be grateful for Summit Christian Academy.
- Be grateful for the future God has for you, including a good career, an awesome family and plenty of friends.

### **General Host Family 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 Host Family 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 Host Family will provide you with a key to the house. Be responsible with your house keys. If you lose the key you may have to pay for the replacement.

*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. during 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 Host Family 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 lunch bag with you to 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 Host Family 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, 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. Host Family 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. SCA encourages the Host Family to have an open door policy on bedrooms. Especially if computers are allowed in the rooms, your door should remain slightly 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:* Clean up after yourselves. Throw things away. There should be no water on the floor after a shower. Make sure the toilet doesn't run. Americans do put the toilet paper in the toilet and flush it away (and not in the trash can). Remember that it is not a public bathroom. Have some pride and help keep it clean.

*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. Do not use the washing machine or dryer by yourself until your Host Family has given you permission.

*Chores:* You may be assigned daily or weekly chores with Host Family 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 will.



*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 Host Family 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 Host Family 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 Host Family 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 Summit Christian Academy is to learn and improve your English. We expect English to be spoken in your Host Family. You can speak another language when talking with your family or studying for language class. 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 why and ask permission first, then go ahead.

*Cell Phones:* The student will need to purchase his or her own phone plan and not be added to the Host Family'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 iPhone, 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.

*Church:* You will attend weekly church services with your Host Family. This is not optional. Part of your contract to attend SCA 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.

*Transportation:* SCA classes start at 8:10am Monday-Thursday. Be ready and dressed up in your uniform in plenty of time to get to school whether you ride the school bus, walk, or are driven by your Host Family. Bus transportation is provided by SCA to transport students to school and from school. The cost is included in the Exchange Student Fees. Your Host Family will familiarize you with the bus route. The SCA bus service is not a way to get elsewhere after school like the mall, library, friend's house, tutor, etc. It is up to your Host Family 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 Host Family 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 Host Family 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 Host Family is expected by SCA to know where you are at all times. You must have your cell phone with you any time you are out of the house.

*School Activities:* Your Host Family is encouraged to participate in school activities, especially the Open House night in the fall, and watching your sporting events or music concerts in place of your parents. Making contact



with other Exchange Students and their Host Families in your area is a great way to find carpool and friends for students. A roster of all Host Families and their contact information is available by request.

*Illness/Medicine:* It is important to let your Host Family 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 Host Family calls the Attendance Hotline to let SCA you will not be at school.

*Student Finances:* Each student will have their own spending money. SCA 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 Host Family 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 Host Family.
- Travel and Excursions: Any cost associated with personal travel activities.
- Personal Items: Toothpaste, 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 SCA).
- Cell Phones.
- Miscellaneous: Stamps, film and processing, various school fees.

Ask questions any time about school, family life, problems, homework or anything else. Start first with your Host Family. If you need further assistance, you may speak with the Exchange Student Program Coordinator and she will help or direct you to where you can get help.

### **Host Family Rules:**

Your Host Family will most likely be the first people you meet when they meet you at Spokane Exchange Airport (GEG) when you first arrive. They will also be responsible to get you back to GEG at the end of the school year. The following are the roles of your Host Family, along with the rules and guidelines already listed.

They will:

- go over above rules and guidelines with you provided in the Exchange Student Handbook and the campus handbook.
- monitor your grades and assignments.
- participate in school activities in place of the parents, especially the Open House night in the fall as well as sports, dramas, or other school activities you are involved in.
- complete the 10 hours of family volunteer hours required to Summit Christian Academy.
- stay in contact with the Exchange Student 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 Exchange Student Coordinator.
- provide the student with a key to the house.
- make sure the student has a ride to and from school every day and that they are not late to school or allowed to excessive absences.
- provide a healthy family life, a willing commitment, and realistic expectation of the student.

- encourage students to speak English and be a part of family activities.
- ensure that the student is not required to babysit younger family members.
- help the student understand and adjust to American culture.
- 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.
- provide transportation to appointments, school events, church, and other places within reason.
- assist the student in setting up cell phone service when they arrive. Host Family 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 under the age of 18 to be left home alone overnight without an adult over the age of 25 supervising.
- not charge the student for “extras” (food, transportation, family outings). Host Family families are paid a stipend from SCA and this will cover all expenses.
- notify the Exchange Student Coordinator of any family changes including people moving in or out of the home.
- allow the Exchange Student Coordinator or any SCA administrator to inspect the Host Family prior to placement and during the year for routine home visits, announced or unannounced.

### **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 SCA on an F-1 visa. If the visa is denied, all but the \$500.00 application fee will be refunded upon Summit Christian Academy 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. Host Family information will be provided to the student approximately one month before arrival. If the student has their own Host Family, they must be approved and a home visit made before I-20 is issued.
4. All new Exchange Students to the High School are required to attend the Exchange Student Orientation (during last week before school). Along with the assistance of the Exchange Student Coordinator a schedule of classes will be prepared for the student based on their interests. English and/or Math placement test will be given to all new students during the Exchange Student Orientation.
5. The student should arrive to the area no later than 3 days before the start of classes.
6. Any student using a 3rd party agent, SCA will recognize them as your agent as long as you attend SCA or your agent lets us know otherwise.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Why am I considered an Exchange Student?** If you are a student whose primary address is outside the United States and/or you need an I-20 (F-1 Student Visa), you are considered to be an Exchange student. All students must remain with an Exchange Student status for a minimum of 2 years while at SCA. Any change is

immigration status must be reported in writing to the Exchange Student Program Coordinator by June 1 for consideration of change in status.

**When is my application due?** Completed applications, along with a \$500 USD application fee, must be received no later than April 15, 2014 for the 2014-2015 school year. Applications received after April 15, 2014 will be placed in our Wait Pool and considered on a “best fit for space available” basis.

**Does SCA offer tuition assistance for Exchange students?** SCA does not offer tuition assistance for Exchange students nor does it offer merit scholarships.

**Will SCA provide a guardian or arrange for Host Family for Exchange students?** SCA does place the students with a Host Family on a 10-month stay. Starting in 2014-2015 school year, students may live with parent or immediate family members who are legally allowed to live in the USA. All other students must use the Host Family placements made by SCA.

**Who are the primary contacts for Exchange admissions?**

Elena V. Solodyankin

SCA Exchange Student Coordinator

8913 N. Nettleton Lane | Spokane, WA 99208

888-924-4618 ext 204

[esolodyankin@ncek12.com](mailto:esolodyankin@ncek12.com)

## IMMIGRATION AND VISA INFORMATION

### General Information:

When you come to Summit Christian Academy (SCA) 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](http://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 Exchange 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 USA. 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 SCA)

### **SEVIS Immigration I-20 A-B Form:**

The I-20 process begins after you are accepted to SCA. Elena Solodyankin 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 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 SCA. If you intend to leave the United States at any time during your time at SCA (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 SCA full-time during I and II semesters. Do not work without proper authorization. Adhere to all federal laws regarding Exchange student immigration requirements

### **Arrival to Summit Christian Academy:**

When you buy your ticket, you should plan to fly into Spokane Exchange Airport (GEG). GEG airport is about a 30-minute drive to SCA. Your new Host Family will pick you up at GEG. Please contact Elena Solodyankin if you have questions concerning flights or arrival. Students may not arrive in the USA prior to 30 days before the first day of school. Students arriving more than 5 days before that first day of school may incur additional housing fees at \$25 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 Washington. You will be able to find any items you need as personal hygiene items and materials for your schoolwork with your Host Family.

### **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
- Alarm clock (this can be purchased in US)

- Umbrella (this can be purchased in US)
- 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
- Swimsuit
- Casual clothing for summer and winter
- A warm coat for winter and a lighter coat for fall and spring
- Boots for winter and lighter shoes for spring/fall
- Uniform clothing (please see the Uniform Flier)

**Your Host 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, soap, toilet paper

**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 of foreign countries. 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. Show respect by acknowledging the teacher's 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 used to asking questions in class, speak to your teacher after class or after school.
- At the beginning 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. Practice taking notes.

### **Academic and Guidance Counselor:**

Your academic and guidance counselor will help you plan and schedule your courses at SCA as well as the Exchange Student Coordinator. 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 SCA 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. 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 SCA student.
2. It gives you access to all home sporting games for free.
3. It can get you access for the public library.
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 SCA Academic calendar for the last day to add or drop classes. Withdrawing from classes, like 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:**

SCA 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. 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 a pencil and plain paper or printed answer sheen (ScanTron). No books, notes, calculators, phones, electronic organizers or other electronic gadgets are allowed during an exam except if the instructor has indicated differently. Papers need to be written 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 is 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 SCA-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 Host Family is strictly prohibited.
- All gambling on the SCA property is strictly prohibited.
- Slander and profane language, physical or violent verbal abuse of any person on SCA property, at events sponsored by SCA, or Host Family property will not be tolerated and will result in discipline action.
- Harassment or intimidation of another student, faculty, or Host Family member or the threat of physical or emotional harm will not be tolerated.
- Lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct on SCA property or Host Family 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 SCA, public or private property will result in discipline action.
- Unauthorized entry and misuse of SCA facilities or property, including the unauthorized use of computers, telephones, or other SCA 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 SCA or Host Family 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 SCA 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 SCA 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 Exchange students are required to have health insurance while attending Summit Christian Academy. There are many different types of health insurance policies available, the policies vary in cost as well as what they cover.



SCA has contracted with an insurance provider to provide a cost effective insurance plan that meets the needs of most Exchange students. In an effort to protect you from plans that do not provide sufficient coverage, SCA 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 Thursday 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. Below is a short list of American holidays and customs surrounding those holidays.

**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.

**Springtime (date varies): Easter Sunday.** This is a Christian holiday, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**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.** Memorial Day was established to pay tribute to all members of U.S. Military who died in the service of their country.

**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.

**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.