



# **FPS International Student Handbook**

Contact the PDSO (principal designated school official) with any questions, concerns, and ALL travel plans.  
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## **Program Overview**

Furtah Preparatory School has been welcoming students from around the globe for over 10 years. We have hosted students from Bulgaria, Chile, China, Columbia, Croatia, Cyprus, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Panama, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Our program is family centered and values full cultural and academic immersion. Students live with host families, adapting to the lifestyle and expectations of an American household while maintaining a full time course load at FPS.

International students who attend FPS have the opportunity to be challenged academically, and will leave high school well prepared for study at an American college or university. In addition, they will gain a strong understanding of American culture and will have opportunities to pursue interests in athletics, art, and other interscholastic and extracurricular activities.

Our international program focuses on academic and cultural assimilation, making it a fulfilling experience which will broaden students' horizons and set them up for future success.

## **Guardianship**

International students enrolled at FPS are officially under its guardianship while school is in session (known as "in loco parentis"). In turn, a host family agrees to provide a safe, supportive home life for the student and serves as the daily guardian for the student while in the home. The host parents are considered the student's parents while in the United States.

## **Student Arrival & Departure**

International students are expected to arrive by the FPS first day of school (usually the beginning of August). All students are required to email their host families during the summer to keep them informed of their travel plans to the U.S. Host families will meet their student at the airport and bring them to their new home in the States. Students should plan to return home after the end-of-year ceremonies (usually the end of May). Students returning for the following school year will be required to have their I-20 Form updated by the PDSO prior to their departure home (which requires a deposit on the next year's tuition).

## **Host Family Assignments**

In most cases, our hosts are families who have a son or daughter attending FPS. The School makes housing assignments based on the information collected from the student after they enroll and does its best to match students with a family who can meet their housing requests. FPS will provide each student with contact information for their host family so students and host families can begin communicating over the summer.

Changes to housing assignments are not permitted unless a formal request has been reviewed and approved by the School. FPS implements a three-week waiting period at the beginning of the school year before considering requests for housing changes. Many times, students who are uncomfortable with their housing assignment are experiencing culture shock and simply need some time to adjust. In the rare case where a change is deemed appropriate, the School will work to identify a new host family and facilitate the move.

## ***Living with a Host Family***

### **Participation in Family Life**

At FPS, the International Students are fully integrated into the classrooms, as well as into Interscholastic and Extracurricular Activities. Therefore, we expect students to be integrated in the family life of the home. This includes respecting the house rules, eating with the family, participating in family activities and completing chores as appropriate. FPS expects both the student and their host family to make a genuine effort to communicate and nurture a mutual understanding and friendship.

### **Room Furnishings: What is Provided & What to Bring**

International students at FPS might have their own room, or they may, with permission of the Natural Family, share a room with another student. Each student will have his/her own bed (with linens), place to study, and access to a bathroom with a shower/bath. Students provide all their basic toiletries, such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, hair and eye care products, deodorant, etc. Students are responsible for bringing their own computer or laptop.

### **Meals**

FPS believes in the value of a nutritious diet. We ask our host families to provide healthy menus in their homes. Host families provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack. (On school days, students will pack the lunch items to take to school.) Students should feel comfortable talking directly to their host family about foods they prefer to eat and foods they do not like. If the student has any specific dietary needs (such as food allergies) it is important to inform the host family so they may provide appropriate meals that meet those needs.

Learning about food is an important part of understanding a new culture. Students are encouraged to embrace the cultural experience of the family meal as prepared by the host families as part of their learning experience. Often, the international students will have an opportunity to teach their host families about food from their own countries as well.

## **Curfew**

Students are expected to maintain healthy sleep habits in order to be productive and engaged in their school and community. Therefore, host families may set “lights-out” times or quiet hours. As part of their house rules, families will set a curfew that students must respect.

## **Homesickness/Culture Shock**

Culture shock is a phenomenon that many international students encounter, and it is often related to homesickness or difficulty adapting to a new environment. Studying in a foreign country is exciting, but can be overwhelming at times- especially at the beginning of the school year! Culture shock and homesickness can sometimes feel like sadness, loneliness, fatigue, or depression. Speaking with family from back home can help, but the best way to overcome culture shock is to try connecting with new friends and family in the United States.

The faculty and staff at FPS are always willing to talk to a student who is experiencing feelings of sadness or loneliness. Students should also feel comfortable speaking with the PDSO and the Principal.

## **Religion**

Host families may invite students to attend worship services as part of the cultural experience, but students are not required to participate. Host families are accommodating of religious differences and students are allowed to practice and worship according to their own belief system.

## **Academics**

### **Course Schedule**

International students carry a full course load appropriate for a college-bound, high school student. The Georgia Department of Education requirements for High School are followed and adhered to. Class placement is based on previous transcripts and is adjusted as needed according to demonstrated ability within the classroom.

### **ESL**

Students are expected to speak and write English with enough proficiency to keep pace with classes and manage basic conversations with teachers and other students.

### **Field Trips**

Students at FPS may take field trips throughout the school year. There may be an additional cost associated with these field trips, and that cost is the responsibility of the student.

### **College Counseling**

Students at FPS have the opportunity to speak with the Principal regarding their college plans and needs. As a senior, all students take part in career planning.

## **Student Expectations**

International students are held to all FPS academic and behavioral standards, including the Dress Code and Code of Conduct. Just as our regular students are required to sign that they have read the FPS Student Handbook, so shall our International Students be required to sign that they have read and understand the FPS Student Handbook.

### **FPS Dress Code**

International Students must abide by the FPS Dress Code and are expected to dress in a manner that is neat, clean and appropriate. The Dress Code can be found in the FPS Student Handbook and on the FPS website.

### **FPS Code of Conduct**

International Students are held accountable to the FPS Code of Conduct as described in the Student handbook. As international students are always under our care and supervision, the code of conduct applies to both their school and home lives.

International Students found in violation of a major school rule, state law, or Department of State law will be required to see the PDSO and will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Decisions and discipline regarding academic distress or violations of the Code of Conduct are in the domain of the Principal.

Students with serious or repetitive academic and/or behavioral issues may be removed from FPS at the School's discretion, and sent home.

In terms of communication normally conducted with parents (i.e. discipline, progress reports and parent conferences), FPS will keep both the host family and the natural family informed as appropriate. Both families will have access to Family Portal.

## **Attendance and Vacation Periods**

### **Attendance and Sick Days**

Students are expected to arrive by the FPS first day of school (early August) and stay through the FPS last day of school (late May). Students are expected to attend school every day unless they have an excused absence that is reported to the Main Office. If a student repeatedly misses school, FPS reserves the right to re-evaluate that student's ability to remain enrolled at the School.

### **School Holidays and Vacations**

The host family is expected to host their student for all school breaks during the school year from August to May. Students are *allowed* to return home during the December break in order to spend time with family and friends. However, students are expected to be present for the first day of the new semester (early January).

### **Travel**

International students are not permitted to travel within the U.S. without school approval. Students are required to communicate ALL travel plans during the school year **in advance of the travel**. This includes arrival date, departure date, and any travel (even within the United States) from August to May. This communication can be done via email or in person to the PDSO. Any travel that requires missing class will require additional approval from the Principal. Any travel that requires missing scheduled sports practices or games will require additional approval from the Athletic Director.

**Please note: Communicating travel plans with the Principal, Athletic Director, Host Family, or other FPS Staff does NOT waive the requirement to communicate with the PDSO.** In the case of unusual travel plans, FPS reserves the right to confirm these plans with the student's natural parents and secure permission in writing.

*It is the student's responsibility to make sure they have a current I-20 prior to travel outside the U.S.*

## **Health Information**

### **Health Insurance**

All international students are required to purchase a health insurance plan before arrival and maintain coverage throughout their stay.

To purchase comprehensive health insurance, FPS recommends using International Student Insurance, a company that offers insurance plans for international students who will be studying in the United States. Here are a few options:

- ISO International Student Insurance - [https://www.isoa.org/Furtah\\_Preparatory\\_School](https://www.isoa.org/Furtah_Preparatory_School)
- ISI International Student Insurance - <https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/student-health-advantage/apply/>
- IMG Global (Student Health Advantage Plan) - <https://www.imglobal.com/>

### **Georgia Immunization Form 3231**

FPS requires all immunization forms to be transferred to the official Georgia Immunization Form 3231. There may be certain immunizations required upon arrival according to the Georgia State law. These immunizations and the necessary forms can be obtained at the local health department. It is the responsibility of the Host Family to help ensure the International Student is in compliance with Georgia law regarding immunizations.

### **Physicals to Play Sports**

International students who want to play a winter or spring sport may need to get an updated physical in the United States if the one they have on file expires during the school year.

### **Doctor's Visits and Emergency Treatment**

The costs associated with Doctor's visits and other medical treatments are the responsibility of the student. (The host family is not responsible for paying the costs associated with medical care.)

## **Transportation and Other Logistics**

### **Transportation**

The host family is responsible for providing transportation to and from school and school functions. The host family and student are expected to work out an agreement regarding extracurricular activities, such as athletic team practices, social gatherings, movies, etc. As in any family, the goal is to find a good balance between allowing the student to experience a full range of school activities with the family's availability to provide the transportation.

### **Cellphones**

Students are responsible for establishing their personal cell phone plan. While some students may choose an international cell phone plan from a carrier in their home country, it is usually the most cost effective to purchase a prepaid or cell phone plan in the United States after they have arrived. Host families are asked to assist students in selecting their cell phone plan and setting up an account with the provider of their choice. It is recommended that the International Students have their own plan if they have a cell phone. They should not be placed on the Host Family's plan. (Host families are not responsible for paying for a cell phone plan.)