



International Student Handbook

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Program Overview

Manlius Pebble Hill School has a long history of welcoming students from around the globe into our Upper School and has recently hosted students from China, Korea, Africa, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Chile and India. 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 MPH.

International students who attend MPH will be challenged academically and will leave our 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 the performing/fine arts, athletics and other extracurricular activities.

The dual nature of our program (academic and cultural) makes it a unique and fulfilling experience which will broaden students' horizons and set them up for future success.

Guardianship

International students enrolled at MPH are officially under its guardianship while school is in session. In turn, MPH assigns students to a host family approved by the school who agrees to provide a safe, supportive home life for the student. MPH has the authority to approve, deny, and/or require a student's participation in any activity should the School deem it necessary.

Student Arrival & Departure

New international students are expected to arrive in Syracuse in time to attend International Student Orientation. Returning students are expected to arrive in time to attend the first day of school.

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 in June. Students returning for the following school year will be required to have their I-20 Form signed by the International Student Coordinator prior to their departure home.

Orientation

All new international students are expected to attend International Student Orientation, traditionally held one week before classes begin.

The goal of the International Student Orientation is to acquaint students to MPH culture, introduce them to other international students and familiarize them with campus resources. Orientation is conducted by the International Student Coordinator and the Dean of Students with assistance from the Head of Upper School and Director of Admissions. Experienced international students and current MPH students will show the new students around campus and will act as their mentors.

Host Family Assignments

MPH assigns students to live with a host family. In most cases, our hosts are families who have a son or daughter attending MPH. 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. MPH 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. MPH 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 rare cases when a change is deemed appropriate, the School will work to identify a new host family and facilitate the move.

The cost of attendance includes a Housing Fee that is paid to the School at the time of enrollment. The entire Housing Fee is allocated to the host family to cover the costs associated with hosting a student.

Notice: the Housing Fee does not include housing during the MPH Winter break (typically December 23-January 5). Please refer to the *Attendance & Vacation Periods* section for specific details.

Living with a Host Family

Participation in Family Life

Our program joins together a rigorous academic experience with a rich cultural experience. 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. MPH 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

All international students will have their own room with a twin bed (w/ linens), desk, chair, reading light, dresser, small bookcase, and closet or armoire. The host family will provide bathroom soap and bath towels. 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. Printers are available at the School in the library and computer labs, but if students want a printer in their room they should purchase one for themselves after arrival.

Meals

MPH believes in the value of a nutritious diet and provides a morning snack and healthy lunch every school day. We ask our host families to provide similarly healthy menus in their homes.

Host families provide a nutritious breakfast and dinner daily, lunches on weekends/holidays and snacks. 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 meets 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.

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 MPH are always willing to talk to a student who is experiencing feelings of sadness or loneliness. Students should also feel comfortable speaking with the International Student Coordinator or School Counselor to help them work through the symptoms of culture shock.

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, Upper School student. The MPH International

Student Coordinator and Head of Upper School will Skype with students during the summer to determine create their course schedule.

ELL Program

All international students are required to participate in the MPH English Language Learners Program (ELL) as part of their course schedule. The ELL Program is a course sequence that consists of ELL 1 & ELL 2. Initial placement in the ELL program is determined by assessment of each student's application portfolio, which includes the TOEFL score submitted at the time of application and the admissions interview. Students placed into ELL 1 must demonstrate satisfactory proficiency to progress to ELL 2. All international students are required to complete ELL 2 to satisfy graduation requirements.

Students take the TOEFL exam at the end of each academic year so that we may monitor their improvement in English proficiency and make appropriate placements in the ELL program. Please refer to the section on TOEFL and SAT Preparation for additional information.

Field Trips and Class Trips

MPH believes strongly in the importance of learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Many of our courses involve local field trips to museums, lectures or performances. Each grade takes day-long or multi-day trips to various locations where they can explore local historical and cultural sites, visit colleges and build a sense of camaraderie.

**Note: some field trips carry fees which are billed to the student's account.*

College Counseling

MPH is a college preparatory school, and students will receive thorough and careful assistance selecting a college and completing their required application process. In the fall of

junior year, students are required to take the PSAT exam. Formal college counseling begins in late winter and includes discussion of PSAT and TOEFL scores, potential college majors, and appropriate college placement.

During senior year, English teachers provide support for college application essay writing. Each student's progress is carefully managed through the successful resolution of the application process.

Our goal is to help students identify the school that will be the best for him/her given their individual strengths, interests and goals. We encourage students to look closely at their college choices and apply to a wide range of schools that best compliment their application. We work closely with strong colleges and universities so that we can best understand what they look for in student applications and thus direct our students toward successful matches.

Because our international parents cannot participate in the family conferences and workshops we host at MPH, we send home regular reports, summarizing the student's progress and current direction in college planning.

TOEFL and SAT Preparation

MPH coordinates a field trip for all international students to take the TOEFL exam at the end each school year. TOEFL scores are used to help determine progression from ELL 1 to ELL 2 and are also reviewed by the Head of Upper School, Director of College Counseling and International Student Coordinator to assess student progress. The goal is to help international students achieve higher TOEFL scores so they may present stronger applications to American colleges and universities.

Additionally, MPH Community Programs offers a PSAT/SAT preparation course three times a year to help students prepare for

these standardized tests. This course is optional and carries an additional fee. Information is given during the school year to interested students.

Student Expectations

International students are held to all MPH academic and behavioral standards, including the Dress Code and Code of Conduct.

MPH Dress Code

International students must abide by the MPH Dress Code and are expected to dress in a manner that is neat, clean and appropriate. The Dress Code can be found in the MPH Parent-Student Handbook, online at www.mph.net (click on *Students*, then *Parent-Student Handbook*).

MPH Code of Conduct

International students are held accountable to the MPH code of conduct as described in the Parent-Student handbook. As international students are always under our care and supervision, the code of conduct applies to both their school and home lives. Students found in violation of a major school rule or state law will be required to see the Dean of Students and subject to disciplinary consequences.

Decisions and discipline regarding academic distress or violations of the Code of Conduct are in the domain of the International Student Coordinator, Dean of Students and the Head of Upper School. Students with serious or repetitive academic and/or behavioral issues may be removed from MPH at the School's discretion.

In terms of communication normally conducted with parents (i.e. discipline, progress reports and parent conferences), MPH will

keep both the host family and the International Student Coordinator informed as appropriate. All formal communication will be mailed or emailed to the student's families in their home country.

Attendance and Vacation Periods

Attendance and Sick Days

Students are expected to attend school every day unless they have an excused absence that is reported to the Attendance Officer. In the event of illness, the host family will notify the Attendance Officer. If a student repeatedly misses school, MPH 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 during the one-week Thanksgiving break, February winter break, and April spring break. During these vacations, students will have the opportunity to participate in school-organized trips, but may also choose to visit family or friends in the U.S. or return home.

The host family is *not* expected to host their student during the two-week December Break. Students are encouraged to return home during this time to relax and spend time with family and friends. If students are unable to return home, MPH may be able to arrange short-term accommodations for a pro-rated fee.

Students are required to communicate their plans in writing to the International Student Coordinator and host family prior to each vacation period.

Travel

International students are not permitted to travel within the U.S. without school approval while under the school's guardianship. All travel plans need to be communicated to the International

Student Coordinator and host family in advance. In the case of unusual travel plans, MPH reserves the right to confirm these plans with the student's parents and secure permission in writing. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure their I-20 form is signed prior to travel outside of the U.S.**

Health Information

Health Insurance

All international students are required to purchase a health insurance plan before arrival. This insurance is required in addition to the coverage purchased through MPH for its school day or school-sponsored activities (*included in the MPH fees*). To purchase comprehensive health insurance, MPH recommends using ISO Insurance, a company that offers insurance plans for international students who will be studying in the United States. For more information, visit the ISO website at www.isao.org.

Health Forms

MPH provides students with the required health forms in their New Student packet at the time of enrollment. All required forms need to be submitted to the MPH Health Office by the first day of classes.

New York State law requires all new students to have a physical exam within 30 days of starting school. International students should have this exam done by their physician in their home country. 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

All host families are provided with a Medical Release Form assigning them permission to seek medical treatment for their host student, if necessary. Both the School and the host family have the legal right to sign all emergency medical release or

authorization forms which may be required by doctors, hospitals and other medical emergency care providers should the need arise.

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).

Additional Support Services

MPH has a variety of support services available to our students. Our Health and Wellness Department includes a certified nurse and nurse practitioner. MPH is able to provide basic counseling on-site and make referrals as appropriate.

Logistics

Transportation

The host family is responsible for providing transportation or arranging busing 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.

Driving & Insurance

International students are *not permitted* to rent, own or operate a motor vehicle while under the guardianship of the School.

Banking and Finances

After arrival in the U.S., students are encouraged to establish an account with a local bank so they can obtain a credit/debit card and easily access their spending money during the year. The host

family will help students set up their account at a bank of the student's choice. Students will need their passport, visa and I-20 to establish their account (these documents demonstrate inability to obtain a social security number and prove legal visitor status in the United States).

Cell phones

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 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.