



## CHINESE STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Prepared by Dana H. Lee, National Director of YFU China

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS

**Selection:** Most exchange students are selected from the best schools and their grades are above average. Under the Chinese education system, students are accustomed to concentrating solely on studying and almost nothing else.

**Expectations:** Like all YFU exchange students, Chinese students have strong desires to learn, broaden their views and horizons, make friends and learn a new language.

**Personality:** Generally speaking, Chinese students are obedient of rules. Chinese students generally have easy-going personalities, though they frequently do not open up quickly and can be shy. Given that Chinese students are accustomed to listening to their teachers at school and following the decisions made by their parents at home, they often lack the sense of independence—both in terms of thinking and in their actions—that we associate with teenagers in the United States.

**Only child:** In the late 1970s China passed a law known in the West as the One-child Policy\* that requires payment of a “social compensation fee” for couples having more than one child. This policy has been very effective and may mean that Chinese students arriving in the U.S. are accustomed to being an only child. As a result of not having siblings and getting all the attention from their parents and grandparents, Chinese students have a tendency to be self-centered.

*\*As of January 1, 2016, the one-child policy law has been abolished. Families are now allowed to have two-children.*

**Social life:** Students in China are under tremendous pressure to earn a high score on their university entrance exams. They study extremely hard for these entrance exams and seldom have time to be with their friends and classmates. Chinese students are unlikely to be accustomed to the way Americans approach one another and start conversations so freely. The potentially limited social skills of Chinese students may result in initial challenges.

**Natural Parents:** The natural parents of Chinese exchange students generally have good jobs and above-average incomes. Most of them are open-minded and support their children’s exchange experience. At the same time, they care very much about their child’s future education—sometimes too much. Natural parents may put a lot of pressure on their children to use the exchange experience to prepare for university.

### POINTS THAT YFU CHINA COVERS WITH STUDENTS AT THEIR PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

**Preparation for challenges:** YFU China emphasizes that students need to prepare for challenges and difficulties during their upcoming exchange year.

**Adapt:** YFU China tells students that they should try as much as possible to adapt to the new culture and environment. Participate: YFU China asks that students actively participate in their community, school and host family, and try to make friends with local people.

**Area Representatives:** YFU China encourages students to contact their AR if they need help. If the AR is not available or cannot help, they are supposed to contact their Field Director and the District Office.

**Testing:** YFU China strongly discourages students from taking the TOEFL/SAT exams and applying to other schools/ universities while they are in the U.S. Students and their parents sign an agreement with YFU China that students will not seek a second year with a school that will sponsor them on F1 while on the YFU program.

**Pre-Departure Orientation for NPs:** YFU China organizes a one-day orientation for the natural parents to include discussions about:

- cultural shock
- frequency of contacting the student
- limitations on computer and cell phone use
- planning for the student's future education without interrupting their exchange life
- visits by natural parents and relatives
- return schedule at the completion of the exchange year.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOST FAMILIES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES FROM YFU CHINA

**Opportunities and encouragement:** Provide students with opportunities to participate in activities and make friends. Students may need extra encouragement.

**Problems:** If you notice any problems, talk to the students and give them clear directions and guidance. If possible and appropriate, notify YFU China of the problems as early as possible so that we can provide our assistance together with that of the natural parents.

**Language tests/Applications:** If students ask to take the TOEFL/SAT or apply to US schools for the next year, please tell them that spending time preparing for these tests/applications hurts their major task to learn about American culture, society, and language. Host families are not obligated to provide assistance with these tests and applications. Host families should contact the YFU AR for support if their Chinese student asks to do this. If necessary, please notify YFU China and we will communicate with the natural parents.

**Visits from NPs and relatives:** YFU China discourages visits from natural parents and relatives during the exchange year.

**Return:** YFU China hopes to have the host family's cooperation in helping students return to China at the originally scheduled time. Departure on the planned date is very helpful as YFU China is required to report to the American Consulate when each YFU student returns from their program.





