



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs

YFU USA's Commitment to Safety

IS IT SAFE TO STUDY IN THE USA?

The top priority of YFU offices around the world is the safety of the young people placed in our care. Please know that while your child is here in the USA, they become our child as well. We are committed to creating meaningful study abroad opportunities for self-discovery and growth. Every student in every location is provided the support of dedicated YFU volunteers and staff. In situations where safety is potentially compromised, YFU acts immediately.

Much like YFU, schools in the USA are also deeply committed to the safety of their students. High schools in the USA actively practice drills meant to prepare young people for a plan of action in the face of both natural and other kinds of disasters. Students arriving to the States may find these drills upsetting and/or frightening, but they are first and foremost, for the safety of the students. USA school systems have specific plans of action that the students are taught should there be a fire, natural disaster or in the very worst cases, an active shooter in the area to keep them as safe.

It is also important to note that many American high schools have other safety measures in place that may include metal detectors at entrances, outside doors that remain locked at all times, and, in some cases, security officers posted at entrances and strategically throughout the building.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY?

In the rare situation that something of this nature impacts a student's exchange experience, YFU has a set emergency protocol, managed by our support team who will coordinate with the student's local area YFU partner and with all appropriate parties to ensure that the student, their host family and natural family back home have the proper support in place.

Student safety is our top priority and YFU trains our students, volunteers, host families, and staff to always report incidents of concern to Support Service Managers. Students receive training pre and post arrival on identifying inappropriate behavior and how to report it to YFU, their trained Area Representatives, school personnel, and local authorities.

YFU is structured to include numerous safety nets and layers of protection to ensure the welfare and safety of all program participants. As a youth organization, 100% of adult staff and volunteers are vetted and must pass thorough criminal background checks prior to working with students. YFU also employs rigorous standards for host family screening and selection, including mandatory in-home interviews, reference checks, and criminal background checks.

ARE HOST FAMILIES SCREENED?

YFU carefully screens potential host families through an application and interview process that includes an in-person and in-home interview. For all US host families, a criminal background check is conducted on adult members of the household (18+). Community references are contacted to evaluate whether the family would be appropriate for an exchange student.

HOW ARE STUDENTS PREPARED?

Host families attend orientations before students arrive and receive training on YFU policies and procedures as well as advice on how to best support you during your exchange. YFU USA conducts participant orientation programs to educate both students and host families about personal safety and ensures monthly contact by trained representatives to supervise and support participants while they are on program.

WHAT IF THE STUDENT AND HOST FAMILY AREN'T A GOOD MATCH?

YFU has an extensive support system in place for students and families while they are on program. Each student is assigned a local Area Representative in the host country, who is available to provide support at all times. They can answer cultural and situational questions and help to mediate should misunderstandings arise between students and host families. YFU also offers a 24-hour emergency hotline should immediate attention be necessary. Students are always welcome to contact the National Office of the YFU organization in the host country with any questions or concerns.

IS YFU A REPUTABLE ORGANIZATION FOR EXCHANGE?

YFU is a Department of State authorized exchange organization. It is consistently listed as the only organization with certification in inbound, outbound and short term J-1 visa exchanges by the CSIET Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs (CSIET.) CSIET is the accrediting agency in the USA for reputable exchange organizations. This certification confirms that YFU has been audited for quality and is in compliance with CSIET quality standards for exchange.