



Merit Preparatory Academy

Foreign Exchange Student Admission Policy

(Updated 2/13/20)

Merit Preparatory Academy provides students from foreign countries the opportunity for a cultural and educational experience within the following conditions:

- Utah School Residency and Educational Act provides that school districts may include membership and attendance of exchange students for the purpose of apportionment of state funds if the student is sponsored by an agency approved by the State Board of Education.
- Merit Preparatory Academy will accept applications for fall arriving exchange students between April 1st and August 1st of each year.
- The primary purpose of school enrollment is to improve the foreign student's knowledge of American culture and language through active participation in family, school, and community life.

Merit Preparatory Academy will accept J1 foreign exchange students who meet the entrance requirements as follows:

- The student must provide at their own expense an official English translated transcript of grades from the school they have attended previously.
- The student must have a C+ or better grade point average in order to be considered for acceptance.
- The student shall be fluent in understanding and speaking English. No ELL or ESL services will be provided to the student.
- Any student with a criminal history or a previous expulsion from another school will not be accepted to Merit Preparatory Academy.
- All required immunizations and health records must be complete and submitted. A TB skin test is also required by the state of Utah.
- School fees as determined by the fee policy of Merit Preparatory Academy must be paid in full prior to the first day of the academic school year.
- A student entering Merit on a J1 visa will not be considered for high school graduation and is not eligible for a high school diploma. A J1 visa student who is enrolled as a senior may participate in the graduation exercises as a non-graduate.
- The student's host family must reside in Utah and be willing to provide transportation to and from school.
- A student must be between the ages of 15 years and 18 years and 6 months at the time of enrollment at Merit Preparatory Academy. Students who have previously graduated from secondary school in their home country are not eligible for admission. Grade level placement will be determined by student's age and the grade level they completed in their home country.

Foreign Exchange student Agency Requirements

- Merit Preparatory Academy will only accept students placed by agencies that are approved by the Council on Standards in International Educational Travel.
- The foreign exchange student agency seeking to place a student at Merit Preparatory Academy must submit a sworn affidavit of compliance to the following:
- The agency has completed a household study, including a background check consistent with section 53G-6-707, of all adult residents of each household where foreign exchange students will reside.

- The agency has reviewed the information revealed through the background checks with an LEA official.
- The agency has completed a background study to assure that the exchange student will receive proper care and supervision in a safe environment.
- The agency has provided host parents with proper training, including information about enhanced criminal penalties for persons who are in a position of special trust.
- The agency will send a representative to visit each student's place of residence at least monthly during the student's stay in Utah.
- The agency will cooperate with the school and other public authorities to ensure that no exchange student becomes an unreasonable burden upon the public schools or other public agencies.
- The agency will provide the student with names and contact information of agency representatives and others who could be called at any time if a serious problem occurs, in the student's native language.
- The agency will provide alternate placements so that no student is required to remain in a household if conditions appear to exist which unreasonably endanger the student's welfare.
- Additionally, Merit Preparatory Academy agrees to provide the foreign exchange student agency with a list of names and contact information of individuals not associated with the agency who could be called by an exchange student in the event of a serious problem. The foreign exchange student agency is responsible to provide this list to the student in the student's native language.

Documentation Required to be Submitted to Merit Preparatory Academy by the Agency

Applications for J1 foreign exchange students may be submitted by an Agency Representative between April 1 and August 1 for placement in the upcoming school year. Applications will be considered on a first-come first serve basis and enrollment is subject to slot availability. The following documents must be submitted by the Agency at the time of application:

- Notarized Foreign Exchange Agency Assurance form
- Copy of the agency CSIET certification for the appropriate school year
- Student application and packet from Foreign Exchange Agency
- Copy of the student's English proficiency results (TOEFL test or SLEP)
- Copy of the student's passport or birth certificate
- Transcript of secondary school credit/records/grades from home country
- Immunization record
- Student/Host Family/Agency Rep. Agreement signed by all parties

The following documentation must be presented upon the arrival of the approved student:

- Proof of student insurance coverage for the duration of the student's stay
- Copy of the student's passport and VISA
- Proof of recent TB test completed in the United States