



This document details expectations and conditions under which Oakhill conducts student exchanges and is also meant to assist incoming exchange students by providing basic information related to the exchange experience at Oakhill.

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## **1. Preparation**

Making contact with the host family in South Africa is possibly the best starting point in terms of preparing for exchange. Parents of exchange students also feel more at ease if they are able to communicate directly with host parents, while exchange students can get a better sense of what to expect by communicating with the host student. The Exchange Coordinator will also communicate much of the basic information once students have been selected for exchange.

## **2. Arrival and Departure**

Exchange students will fly to George Airport which is about 1 hour's drive from Knysna. This will, however, be a connecting flight from either Cape Town International Airport or O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. Most international flights arrive at the latter. From there, the connecting flight to George takes approximately 90 minutes. Exchange students will be collected and dropped off at George Airport by their host parents or as a group by the Exchange Coordinator.

## **3. Accommodation and Entertainment**

As Oakhill does not have boarding facilities, exchange students are hosted by Oakhill families. Some Oakhill families live in neighbouring towns which means that exchange students will share in the experience of being bussed to and from school should they be hosted by one of the families who live in Plettenberg Bay. Host families take most of the responsibility for entertaining exchange students. Excursions include outings to game farms, visits to craft markets, camping and potential trips to Cape Town. The school also organises some of the outings.

## **4. Financial matters**

Students attending Oakhill from reciprocating exchange schools will not pay tuition fees. Exchange students are, however, required to pay an incidental fee which covers tuck shop expenses, Oakhill school uniform, sports kit, as well as any textbooks students may want to purchase. The balance of the incidental payment will be refunded to exchange parents once the exchange is over. Parents are responsible for all costs associated with their child's travel to and from South Africa including travel

insurance. Parents should ensure that their child has adequate pocket money for their stay during exchange. Students are able to access funds via ATMs, etc.

## **5. Medical affairs**

The exchange student's parents are responsible for arranging full medical and dental insurance before the student leaves their home country. Oakhill will require the relevant supporting documentation. The exchange student's parents will be asked to give permission for Oakhill to seek any necessary medical attention for their child. Exchange families will be asked to complete a confidential medical questionnaire so that the school is aware of any serious disabilities and/or medical conditions. Sufficient supplies of any prescription medication needs to be brought along on exchange and the Exchange Coordinator at Oakhill needs to be made aware of this in the form of supporting medical documentation. Medical costs will be paid against the Visa/Mastercard details provided by parents of exchange students. This will facilitate claims against insurance policies. Parents will be informed if/when this billing does occur.

## **6. Official documentation**

It is the responsibility of parents to investigate specific visa requirements for South Africa. Oakhill will provide a **visa letter and letter of acceptance to the exchange** to visiting families. These two documents are important when applying for the visa. Parents also need to ensure that their child has an up-to-date passport and that all forms of insurance is arranged.

## **7. Behaviour and values**

An exchange student violating any law in South Africa may be returned to their home country (this includes contravention of visa stipulations). The use of drugs and alcohol by exchange students is strictly forbidden, as is smoking and vaping. Students who make themselves guilty of such behaviour will face the same disciplinary process as Oakhill students. Students need to be sensitive to the particular cultural environment they find themselves in. Visiting students are encouraged to familiarise themselves to some extent with South Africa's historical context. They are obviously more than welcome to gain valuable insight from their host family prior to arrival. Exchange students are expected to maintain common courtesy, as well as respect for peers, staff and parents. They not only represent their home country and school, but also represent Oakhill for the duration of their exchange. As such, their appearance and behaviour needs to be in line with that of other Oakhill students. Exchange students are expected to attend lessons and are invited to partake in Oakhill academics.

## **8. Safety issues**

Any activity that is deemed potentially dangerous can only be undertaken with the express written permission of the exchange student's parents. These activities would typically include skydiving, hang gliding, bungee jumping, or any similar activity. Any incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment should immediately be reported to the Exchange Coordinator who will investigate the matter further. The exchange student should also report any sense of feeling unsafe or uncomfortable to the Exchange Coordinator.

## **9. Getting involved - what's on offer at Oakhill?**

Culture shock and homesickness are part and parcel of the exchange experience. Apart from preparation via communication with the host family and Exchange Coordinator prior to exchange, exchange students are encouraged to get as involved as possible while on exchange. Apart from a variety of weekend outings, Oakhill offers a number of sports and cultural opportunities. Summer sports (January to March and September to November) include Water Polo, Swimming, Cricket, and Tennis; while Winter sports (March to August) include Field Hockey, Netball, Soccer and Seven-a-side Rugby. Oakhill also boasts a choir and male ensemble, as well as three bands.