

Hosting a Viennese Exchange Student Frequently Asked Questions

Both my Mom and Dad work full-time. How can I be a host? Most host families have working parents. The Austrians fully understand this. You are under no obligation to devote unlimited amounts of time to entertaining these students. They will have their own busy itinerary through the school with limited free time, primarily on the weekend. In fact, many host families would like to have more free time with their guest.

We don't speak German. How will we communicate? For the Austrians, this trip is the culmination of several years of studying the English language. Their objective is to immerse themselves into the American culture and that includes speaking and writing English.

We are a smoke-free family and we've heard some Viennese smoke. The Viennese are quickly jumping onto the anti-smoking bandwagon. Fewer and fewer students are smokers. They are aware that many host families do not smoke. Their teachers/chaperones enforce all no-smoking policies. The students should be aware of your house rules and abide by them, like any other guest in your home. Do not allow anyone to smoke; if this is a problem contact a BG music director immediately.

My son/daughter is involved in sports, extracurricular activities, and school demands. How do we entertain an exchange student after school and during homework time? The majority of host students are involved in multiple activities. In most school-related activities, the Viennese are invited to participate, if they so desire. When there is an occasional conflict, a little advance planning or networking enables these students to get together with their own friends after school. The students are aware that BG students have work, sports and homework commitments.

How old are the Viennese students? The students are 16 - 17 years old and are comparable to our junior students. Our goal is to have sophomores, juniors, and seniors as hosts as these students are the same age, or within a year of the age of our Austrian guests.

We don't have a large home. I don't think we have room for a student. The majority of the Viennese students live in apartments within the city limits. A house of any size is a novelty to many of them. If you have a sofa bed or a bunk bed and somewhere for them to hang their clothes, your home will be considered to be quite large in their eyes.

What types of activities interest them the most? Viennese students have the same interests as BG students. Many enjoy shopping, hanging out with friends, bowling, laser tag, watching movies, listening to music and spending time with their host families.