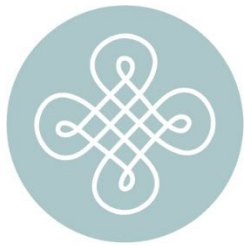


# STUDENT HANDBOOK



**EXPERIMENT**  
DEINE AUSTAUSCHORGANISATION

## **INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM TO GERMANY**

This handbook belongs to

-----  
(name)

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## Important Names and Numbers

### **Experiment– Deine Austauschorganisation**

**Gluckstraße 1  
53115 Bonn**

**Tel.: 0049 228 957220**

**Fax: 0049 228 358282**

**[www.experiment-ev.de](http://www.experiment-ev.de)  
[einreise@experiment-ev.de](mailto:einreise@experiment-ev.de)**

**Emergency phone (in case of  
emergencies on weekends  
and after office hours):**

**0049 170 1288260**

## Factsheet

**Dear student,** we're very happy to welcome you to Germany soon! Here are some points that we would like you to consider during your stay.

### 1. Experiment and your Local Coordinator (LC)

- You will have a LC living close to you and they will contact you during your exchange.
- If you have a problem, call or e-mail your LC. They will help you. Sometimes the LC will give you advice or comments that you might not want to hear but it is in your and everyone else's best interest.
- You can also always call the Experiment office in Bonn. However, if you have something on your mind, **talk to your host family, your LC or the Experiment office staff**. If possible, discuss issues where they arise. Only this way we all can support you properly.

### 2. Your Host Family

- They expect an open, talkative and friendly student.
- Please show interest in your host family. You could set up one day every week where you cook together or suggest a family activity. Be an active part! Offer to help set the table, ask about their lives, traditions, favourite food etc.
- Let them be a part of your life, too. Tell them about your family at home, prepare a typical meal, show them photos of your friends, etc.
- **Most importantly: Talk to them**, even though you think you might **not express yourself perfectly**.
- Find a balance in spending time alone / with your friends and with your host family.
- Integration needs family time, so **limit the use of your smartphone or computer** to max 1h a day.

### 3. Your Visa and Registration

- Semester and Year participants have to make sure to register at the registration office during the first weeks after arrival. All non-European students **must** also register at the foreigners' registration office.
- Be sure to take about 50 - 150 Euros with you to pay for your permit (does not apply to CBYX students).
- If you already have a visa for your whole program length, you don't have to apply for a residence permit. **Check your passport!**

### 4. Your School

- Expects active participation in class without being called – **oral participation contributes up to 50% of your overall grade at school**.
- Talk to your peers and teachers often. Offer to do a presentation about your home country.
- If you need a graded certificate or an accreditation at the end of your stay, you need to **inform your teachers about this on arrival**. You can expect from the school a statement on school headed paper signed by the school principal or vice principal, stating the exact period of attendance, subjects studied with respective weekly hours.
- Academics are an important part of the exchange, **but** you should not spend all day in your room studying for school. Host family and friends are as equally important and you need to find a good balance with contacts.

### 5. Spare time and Making Friends

- Actively try to make friends (in person, not on your smartphone or the computer!)
- **ONE SPARE TIME ACTIVITY PER WEEK IS A MUST**
- Good places to find friends are school, sports clubs, other clubs (*Vereine*), such as an orchestra if you play an instrument etc. Try something new – if you have never done yoga before, join a yoga class!
- Invite friends to your home (after checking with your host family). Ask them to help you with your homework.
- Tell them about your home country/favourite band/author/singer....

### 6. Lines of communication

- Holding on to our lines of communication is a must!

### 7. Travel rules

- There is **no travel permission** during school time! Remember, travelling is a privilege, not a right.

### 8. Insurance

- In case you need to see a doctor, you must take all of your insurance documents with you and pay after receiving the bill via bank transfer. Ask your host family for help..

## 1. Experiment and your Local Coordinator

**Experiment is a non-profit organisation and works with a network of volunteers.** We have our office in Bonn (*Geschäftsstelle*). The office in Bonn takes care of administration and sharing information as well as support work. **We communicate with you mainly via email or phone, therefore check your emails regularly!** However, your first and personal point of contact is your LC = Local Coordinator or *Betreuer\*in*. The name and contact details are found on your placement form.



Your LC is trained by Experiment for important issues that you are likely to experience. Ideally, you will develop a trustworthy relationship with your LC. Your LC is a volunteer and they do their job because of their belief in the value of youth exchange. Please be aware, as a program participant you are responsible for yourself and your actions, your LC's job is not to hold your hand and detect little issues that you have. However, you can always approach to them with concerns, questions or simply to chat over a friendly *Kaffee*! Please be advised that it is **not** the LC's job to check on you all the time. If for some reason you cannot get in touch with your *Betreuer\*in*, please call the office of Experiment in Bonn.

### A BETREUER\*IN HAS SEVERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- They are required to contact you or meet you during the first two weeks. After that, generally, they will check how things are with you every 4-6 weeks. However, **do not hesitate to approach them**. Like all your relationships in Germany, your relationship with your LC is a two-way street, so please stay in contact with them.
- After 8-10 weeks your *Betreuer\*in* will conduct an interview with you to check on your integration process. They will also check with your host family, how they feel and if all administrative work is done (registration, school enrolment etc.). If there are any issues, your *Betreuer\*in* assists you and your host family in the following weeks and might even initiate a conversation with you, your host family and themselves to discuss challenging topics and hopefully resolve them. They are advised to be a neutral mediator in case of conflict.
- If you are staying for a year, there will be a 6 month interview.
- The *Betreuer\*in* will forward interview results to the Experiment office. The team might contact you afterwards to check with you in person about some issues like your health, school problems, issues with your host family or your discipline. The team at the office will not pass on every detail to the partner organisation in your home country but they will give them general feedback on how you are doing.
- In case there is an issue with your host family or community, your *Betreuer\*in* will talk with you and your host family and then discuss the issue with all of you. You might fill in a "plan of success" (*Herausforderungen erfolgreich meistern*) at the end of your conversation.

## 2. Your Host Family



Living with a family will give you a unique opportunity to discover Germany and its people in a way no other travel program can offer. It is a special privilege to be invited to live with a family. Most likely you will find it to be the most interesting and enjoyable part of your visit to our country.

German families differ as widely as those in your own country. Your new German "parents" may be young or old, may have or have not young children, teenagers or grownup children living away from home. For a homestay to be a success it takes work from you and your host family. **All of the families who host for this program do this on a voluntary basis and of their interest in people** and their willingness to open their homes and lives to you. They are also volunteers and are only entitled to an expenditure allowance to help with additional household costs.

### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR HOST FAMILY?

- To be invited to live in their home and to be treated as a member of their family - not as a guest.
- To receive a friendly welcome, however, they might be nervous to meet you.
- To be involved in their normal everyday family life.

- To be requested to **learn (more) German** so you can be a true family member!!
- To have limited internet access.
- To be requested to leave your cell phone in your room or not to use it all the time.

Host families are not obliged to organise trips for you, although some families may do so. Some families also go on vacation while you are here. The host parents might ask you to join their vacation, but of course they are not obliged to pay for it. Please ask your host parents about the cost and then talk to your parents, if they would cover these costs.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Be polite to your host family and to people you meet. **You are an ambassador of your country.** People will meet you and get an impression of you. They will associate you and your behaviour with your country and culture. In a way you are therefore responsible for the impression others get of your country and culture. When you think about it, this is quite a responsibility.
- Ask for your host parents' permission: before inviting friends home, before going on a trip, etc.
- **Tidy up after yourself** while in your host family's home. Keep your room tidy and make your own bed. Always offer to help with household or family errands and chores. This is an everyday part of German family life.
- It's a German thing to open the windows once or twice a day and let in the fresh air (*Lüften*). Germans do this very regularly. Most of us don't have ACs but open the windows for fresh air or turn on the heating in winter. Make sure that the heating is not on full blast with the windows open or on maximum all day - this causes high energy costs for the host family!
- Offer to pay your own way when going shopping, on a holiday or to the movies. They may not want you to pay, but always be sure to offer. This is polite in Germany.
- Inform your host family where you are going, who you are going with and when you will return. Courtesy and respect are important. Remember, they are responsible for you, and they care. If you think you will be late, notify your host parents. Also give them an idea about your long-term plans, so they can make plans too.
- Smoking in the home is not allowed.
- **Participate in all aspects of family life.** Please do not be shy to ask to join in activities. If you need something, your host family may take you to the shop. Please try to give some notice in advance. It is not always convenient to go to the shop right away.
- If you want to sign up for activities after school, please do not assume that your host family can drive you and pick you up several times a week. Always ask.
- Be open and honest with your new family, also your LC and others that you come in contact with during your stay in your host country. You'll find that people are very willing to help you if you have a question, but you need to ask for help. If you don't ask, people will assume that you are ok and this can lead to problems.
- Bring at least one small present for the host family from your home country. They will appreciate it! You can give them away at special occasions like Christmas or birthdays.
- Also prepare some small presents for new friends. If you are invited to birthday parties, a present from another country surely will be interesting to receive.

## MANNERS AND POLITE BEHAVIOUR

What is considered acceptable in your home country may not be acceptable in Germany. If you have questions, please ask your host family. A good suggestion is to watch what others are doing and to follow their example. The following are some general suggestions to help you at first.

- Always be punctual! You are in Germany now. ☺
- Join in family activities instead of staying in your room. If you are unsure, ask your favourite family member.
- If you are upset or angry about something, take a few minutes to calm down before talking (e.g., leave the room or the house for a walk). When you have calmed down, **communicate how you feel and try to solve the situation together with the respective person.** Do not yell, stamp your feet, slam doors or make rude gestures. These behaviours are not acceptable.

- Remember to say “please”, “thank you”, and “may I?” often.
- When you are out with the family and there are packages to carry, help carrying them without being asked. Just help where a hand is needed.

### TABLE MANNERS ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN GERMANY

- Wash your hands before getting to the table.
- Chew food with your mouth closed and take small bites only.
- Keep your elbows off the table and sit upright.
- Help the family to clear the table and to wash up afterwards.
- Germans eat almost all meals with a knife and fork.

## 3. Your Visa and Registration



**The week after your arrival**, make sure you register with your host family at the registration office if you are a Semester or Year student. Please make an appointment together with them.

If you are **not** an EU-citizen, please also make additionally an appointment at the foreigners' immigration office as soon as possible to get your residence permit. You may have to pay for your residence permit, so please make sure to take about 50 - 150 Euros with you to the meeting. A few students (from Colombia, Mexico, Thailand for example) have already received a visa in their home country and have a stamp in their passport. If this visa is not valid for your whole stay in Germany, it needs to be extended as soon as possible. **Please check your passport how long the visa is valid.**

## 4. Your School



### ATTEND ALL CLASSES...

Your attendance is important and **mandatory** for the International High School Program. You may be excused only if you are ill or have special permission from your host parents or teacher.

The use of phones or other devices during the classes are **not allowed**! You may receive devices from the school to participate in class. Use them carefully, often your host family guarantees for the lending.

**The German school system puts special emphasis on students' personal responsibility. This means that you are not actively asked to participate or to do your homework, but you must contribute to class or do your homework on your own.**

### IF CLASSES DO NOT TAKE PLACE....

Find alternative classes you can go to (e.g. during the Abitur). You need to check with the responsible teacher or your contact teacher where you can go.

### AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL...

Sometimes there are afternoon activities called *Arbeitsgemeinschaften* or AGs. These could be: *Kunst-AG* (art), *Sport-AG* (physical education), *Theater-AG* (drama), *Naturwissenschaften-AG* (science), language clubs, bands etc. However, not all German schools offer afternoon activities. We encourage exchange students to ask their host families and friends about what activities are offered in your region. Even if your favourite sport or activity is not offered nearby, **try something new**! This is a perfect opportunity to pursue new interests: *Chor* (choir), *Pfadfinder* (scouts), *Tanzschule* (ballroom dancing).

## SCHOOL LUNCHES...

Are not for free. Please check how much it costs and how to pay for it. You have to pay for your school expenses.

## CLASS TEACHER OR BUDDY...

Please make sure that you know the name of the teacher assigned to you. It might be your class teacher or even a teacher with special responsibility for exchange students. If you have not been introduced or given a name, please ask at the administration office about this.

## IF CLASSES ARE TOO HARD...

Do not despair but talk to your class/contact teacher. They can help you with issues. You might be able to change to a lower grade, a parallel class or change a few of your courses. You could also do a project or a presentation instead of a difficult exam. What's important is that you seek the conversation!

## LEARNING GERMAN AT SCHOOL...

To improve your German, the school might offer classes for exchange students or immigrants. Please ask if there are courses. If there are no courses, you could go to a lower grade German class. This can be fun and topics/ grammar are easier. You could also try out a so-called student "Tandem". In student "Tandem" you teach a student your language and the other student teaches you German.

## GRADES AND CERTIFICATES...

If your language abilities are improving and you are participating well in class, schools may make an effort and give you grades in relevant subjects. It **cannot be guaranteed** that the local host school is able or willing to grade you. This depends on the school system, your language level, your school experience, and federal state restrictions. Once in Germany, please approach your teachers at the host school about this. Further, **it is your duty to take care of grades or certificates** that you need! In general, you can expect from schools a statement on school headed paper signed by the school principal or vice principal, stating the exact period of attendance. You will have to ask on your first day of school if the issued certificate can also contain the subjects studied with respective weekly hours. Sometimes there will be a general evaluation, too. If you completed tests or written exams, you can ask to have the grades stated on your statement.

**Please note:** Active and oral participation without you being actively asked to contribute to class is very important in Germany. It will make up about 50% of your grade, depending on the subject, it might be even more!

## AMBASSADOR PROJECT...

When getting ready for the program you were asked to prepare a presentation about your life and your home country. If you are not asked by your class teacher to do a presentation, offer to do it!

## INTERNSHIP OR PRAKTIKUM...

Your school might plan an internship/ *Praktikum* for their students. This means that students look for an employer that would employ them for a few weeks to experience a work environment. If you do not want to do an internship, you need to find alternative classes/courses.



## 5. School check before arrival

A big part of this programme consists of visiting and participating in a German school. This way you will have the opportunity to gather some insights of another school system as well as another society.

To ensure your successful stay we want to advise you some necessary prerequisites:

- Please inform yourself at your home school if any requirements have to be fulfilled while attending a school abroad.



**What kind of subjects are relevant?**

**Will you need any grades? If yes, for which subjects? (subjects need to be listed)**

**Do you have to be placed at a specific grade level? (Usually placed one below the current grade)**

**Will you need a graded certificate? (A certificate of attendance will be handed over any way)**

Please consider the possibility that none of these requirements might be fulfilled. This means that we can **neither guarantee a placement at a specific grade level, nor are we able to guarantee the participation in specific subjects or the issuance of a graded certificate.**

- Only a few German schools will have the possibility to agree on a personal arrangement concerning your grading and the election of subjects at different grade levels. This means that for example you could take German classes at a lower grade and Maths at your regular level. Or you'll have a personal arrangement on how you will get tested, e.g., only in oral or written exams.

In the end, the German school will decide under which conditions you will complete your year. Please clarify this matter with your German school once in Germany.

Taking these things into consideration,

**Will you be willing or able to retake exams at your home school or repeat a grade level at your school once back home?**

**Will there be any consequences when repeating a school level in your home country?**

- At the beginning of your stay, you'll have the possibility to participate in a German language course. This serves you to broaden your vocabulary, gather some cultural information and to encourage yourself to speak German more often. Furthermore, this is another opportunity to spend some time and exchange experiences with the other participants of the program.

Since German is a difficult language, maybe you already have the opportunity to take part in a course in your home country. Or maybe you are able to visit German classes at school.

Although you will be offered private German classes during the program, living with a German host family and connecting at school, please have in mind that studying in a different language can be very exhausting and hard at the beginning.

The experience shows that students with a lower language level or less experience have difficulties in following the topics discussed in classes or achieving required grades as they are used to it from home. This does not mean that you won't be able to take part in class, but it may include more work than you are used to.

**If grades will be needed and/or a specific grade level placement is requested, we strongly recommend to at least hold a B1 language level in German to ensure a successful participation and graduation.**

Maybe you'll have the possibility to check these things on your home schools' curricula or discuss them with your teacher or a coordinator responsible for exchanges. This way you can be sure about what will be required for your stay abroad and what you have to discuss with your German school 😊

## 6. Spare time and Making Friends



**ONE REGULAR SPARETIME ACTIVITY IS A MUST!** This can be joining a club (*Verein*), a sports team, a music school, an orchestra, a choir, a church group, the voluntary fire brigade, the scouts (*Pfadfinder*), and also any **regular** volunteer activity like helping at the local animal shelter, reading to kids at the kindergarten/ library or at the local nursing home. Please be creative!

Most students come to Germany with the idea of making lifelong friends. You can reach this aim too! Please follow this advice and you are extremely likely to be successful:

- Each and every day talk to people, smile at your classmates, ask questions, and join in activities.
- Show interest in others and their lives. Tell others about your life here or about your life back home.
- Be the one to smile and talk first. Do not worry about your language skills, just talk to everyone (your language skills will improve rapidly because of this). What is there to lose? Just do it!
- Do not be discouraged by a `NO`. Try again another time and if you are not successful, just try someone else.

### A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT MAKING FRIENDS:

- You are going into a situation where people have established friendships. You want to join the group.
- If you spend your time speaking in your language to exchange students from your country, other students will feel left out and will leave you alone.
- ANY afternoon activities such as art, drama (*Theater*), sports or any activity where you work with others are a great way to make friends.
- **Spend time in the real world and not on the smartphone or computer.** That way you get to know your environment and the people that are just next to you now.
- Try to make friends with your host family's neighbours regardless their age, family structure etc. Please also look at chapter 4. **Your School** for afternoon activities.

### MORE GENERAL INFORMATION:

- **BICYCLES...** are a much-loved mean of transport in Germany. Ask your host family if they can help you borrow one or buy one second-hand. They are fantastic to get around, especially in the flat regions.
- You are responsible for your **school expenses, lunches bought at school, snacks, entertainment, stamps and toilet-ries.**
- You must keep track of your own **money**. Make a list of your expenses to make sure that you have enough money all the time. Your host family should NOT be expected to lend you money.
- **CELL PHONES** ... leave them in your room and use them outside. It is **extremely advisable** not to use them in the host families house and school!
- Limit **your time on the PC, notebook, pads, cell phone** etc. to 1 hour a day. Instead of being somewhere else with your thoughts and minds, be here in the real world and spend your exchange year with "real" people.
- Differences in climate or living conditions and the stress which is natural in any major lifestyle change (= exchange year) can lead to illness. It is important to eat a **healthy diet**, get regular exercise and get sufficient sleep while you are in Germany. Or try another common German activity – go for a walk! Around the neighbourhood, in the forest or over the fields. This is important in contributing to a successful homestay.
- If you are a soccer player and you would like to play games here in Germany, you can try to get a *Spielerpass* with the DFB. Please approach the office for more information.



## 7. Lines of communication



Experience shows that in order for a program to be successful, it is important to keep in mind that communication is key. **Therefore, we hereby draw attention to how very important it is that the lines of communication are respected!**

The host families are happy when the conversation with you is sought and problems or difficulties are addressed directly. Thereby it is not bad if your German is not so good at the beginning. The intention counts! If it comes to difficulties in the communication with your host family, ask your LC for support.

Sometimes you might not be sure if the question or what bothers you can be addressed to the host family. In that case, please talk to your LC first. They can help you or give you good advice.

The following model shows you how the communication and thus your stay and your integration into the host family can be successful. Please refrain from telling your problems to your natural parents first. This usually causes complications and misunderstandings, because they will then contact your organization in your home country, which will then inform Experiment. And your host family does not know about your problem yet.

Therefore, ask yourself how you would feel if your host family told only Experiment that they have a problem with you and you don't know anything about it? That is not nice. So we would like to urge you to keep to these lines of communication.

Of course, if you have any problems or complications, you can contact the office. However, our support team will usually refer you to the lines of communication first, if you have not yet tried to talk to your LC and host family. Our philosophy is to strengthen the independence and self-confidence of the exchange students and to support and encourage them in this. Therefore, we will always ask you to lead the conversations yourself.

If it should come to a desire of host family change, we will likewise request you to communicate this to your host family. It is always better for the host family to hear the wishes and problems from their student, rather than from your LC or from the Experiment office.

### Tips on learning German:

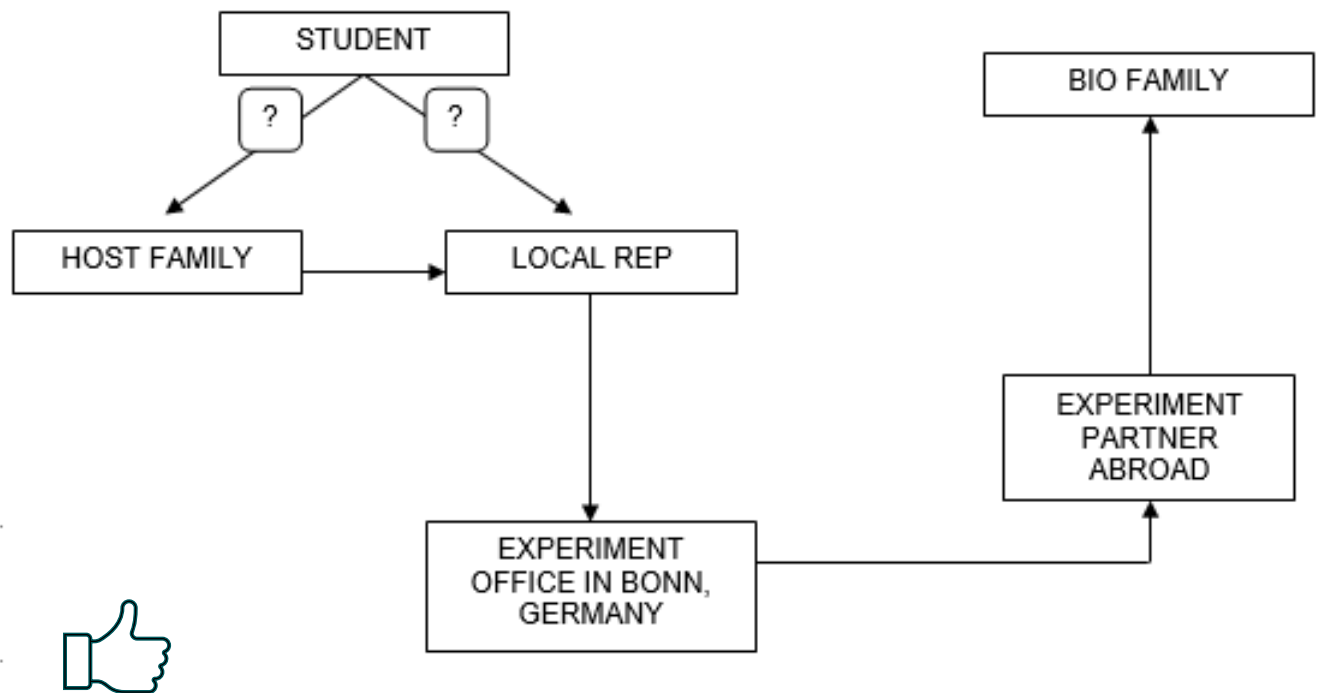
If your German language skills hinder you from talking about things or interacting more with your host family, ask your LC for tips on learning German! There are many different ways to improve your skills outside of school and host family.

German courses  
Offers at school  
Apps and Podcasts  
Books and movies  
Websites

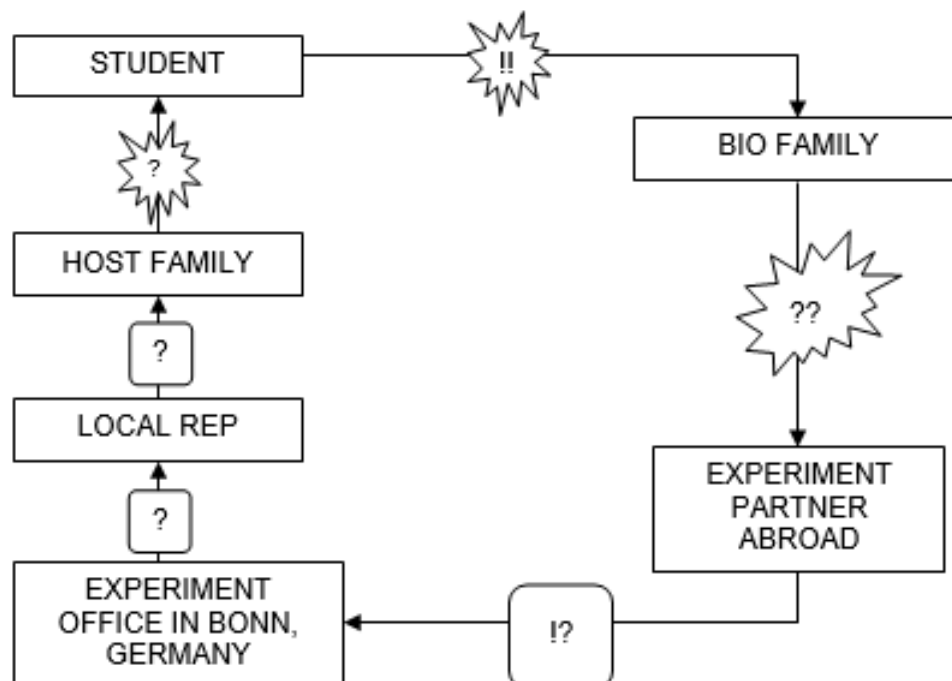
...

### How to proceed in case you need to talk

#### Correct



#### Incorrect





## 8. Travel Rules

Please remember: travelling is a privilege not a right.

	not possible	ok host parents	ok Experiment office and LC	ok biological parents	written invitation from host	detailed itinerary
travelling during the first half of the program	X					
travelling over 18		X	X	X		X
travelling under 18 (with an adult older than 21)		X	X	X		X
international school trips		X	X	X		
travelling to another host family or member of the biological family or friend		X	X	X	X	
Overnight stay with a school friend in the host-community		X				

1. During the first half of the program independent trips are generally prohibited. However, participants are always allowed to travel with their host family and go on school trips.
2. After the first half of the program students who are 18 years and older are allowed to travel individually with the consent of the host family, Experiment and the biological parents. A detailed itinerary and invite of the host has to be submitted. Individual travel should not exceed one week.
3. If a student under 18 wants to travel individually without the host family, a chaperone aged 21 or older, written consent of both the host parents and the biological parents is necessary.
4. Before arranging and booking trips, students need to always talk to their host parents first. Experiment has to give consent to the trip. If a student books a journey before getting the necessary consent and if then Experiment does not give consent, possible cancellation fees will be the responsibility of the student.
5. Regular school attendance is obligatory and travelling on schooldays is not permitted. Travelling is therefore only possible on weekends and during school vacation.
6. Students travelling individually must submit a detailed itinerary including the exact dates of the trip, as well as addresses and telephone numbers of the places the student is going to stay at, to Experiment at least one week before departure.
7. No student will be permitted to travel individually during Christmas or Easter celebrations. These culturally important days are essential to spend with the host family for successful integration.

Note: Individual travelling is regarded as a trip of one or more overnight stays outside the everyday environment.



## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

When you applied to the program, the application included an agreement signed by both you and your parents. Experiment Germany expects all students to always abide by this agreement. Behaviour not in accordance with these Standards of Conduct is cause for the host family, the school, and/or the LC to warn and/or discipline a participant. This may result in the issuing of a formal warning letter or a Letter of Probation from Experiment. This letter will include a list of points for the student to work on. The LC together with office staff and the host family will check the student's improvements. Repeated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are cause for dismissal and lead to repatriation of the student without undue delay. Serious violations include, but are not limited to, breaking German state or federal law. Any additional cost arising from such matters must be covered by the participant or their parents.

We want you to succeed and have a successful stay abroad. By establishing standards and communicating our rules, we protect you, our host families, our LCs and our partners abroad. **If you have a problem:** Call your LC. Describe your problem and be honest. Follow the advice they give you. If you are having trouble reaching your LC, or if you are not comfortable talking with your LC, please contact the Experiment office. Your LC or we may not always tell you what you want to hear. Remember, it is your job to adapt to your host family, your school and your community. If your LC thinks you need to try harder, follow the advice. You can trust your LC.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Students will be held responsible for everything posted on and linked to their profile on **social media and networking sites** like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok and others. This includes statements, comments, photos and videos. Students must refrain from posting any content that indicate a violation of German laws, the laws of the student's home country or the Experiment rules, as well as any content that are perceived as obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing and hateful, or hurtful to the reputation of another person. Further, students must refrain from any online activity that could **compromise their safety or the safety and privacy of their host family or others**. This includes communicating or meeting with strangers and posting any information that could be used to identify their or their host family's identity or location such as full names, address, email address, phone number, bank and credit card information, etc. Any of these actions may result in disciplinary actions such as warning or probation letters and may lead to dismissal from the Experiment program.

## DOWNLOADS/UPLOADS AND FILESHARING

It is **prohibited** by German law to provide media files (mp3, mp4, etc.) for other online users to download via "P2P" platforms or software (such as BitTorrent, emule, popcorn). When downloading media through these platforms, the files are simultaneously offered to other users. Offense against this law is persecuted and can result in fines of up to 3.000 Euros. Therefore, students must refrain from downloading music, software or movie files from other sources than official online stores like "iTunes", "Spotify" or "Netflix". In case students are requested to pay a fine after breaking this law, they are obliged to pay it, and neither Experiment nor the host family will take responsibility. It is also illegal to import these files on a computer and then to use them in Germany. Files will be **automatically** shared with others once using them on the computer.

## 9. Insurance

If you do not bring an appropriate insurance from your home country's organisation to Germany, Experiment has included a combined foreign travel insurance policy for you using the international insurance broker Bernhard Assekuranz. You therefore have **comprehensive health, accident and personal liability insurance for damage incurred abroad**. The insurance coverage does not apply in your home country, except during your departure and return journey to or from your place of residence in the host country. You will be given a **brochure** which gives you detailed information about insurance procedures. Please have a look at it, so that you know what you need to do when you have to go see a doctor for example.

## 10. Useful information about Germany



### SHOPPING



Shops in Germany are tied to legally binding opening hours. Most shops open between 8am and 10am from Monday to Saturday. Some bakeries and newsagents open at 6am. In city centres most shops do not close for lunch but in smaller towns they do!! Monday to Friday most shops stay open until 6pm or 8pm, big supermarkets until 10pm. On Saturdays shops often close earlier at 4 or 6 pm. **On Sunday shops are closed**, however, bakeries are an exception, but they are often only open in the morning. Many petrol stations have very long opening hours, even around the clock.

### MONEY, CARDS and MONEY TRANSFERS

**Underage students are not able to open up a bank account as an exchange student.** Therefore, it's highly important that you make sure you have access to your pocket money! Most student's use a credit card to withdraw money from a machine and many shops offer payment by credit card. Apple Pay, Google Pay or contactless payment are common in Germany, too. Credit cards may only be accepted at bigger shops. In case your home bank and your bank card support this technology, you can pay easily without the need of cash money. **Smaller shops will often not accept credit cards.**



Money transfers for e.g., school bus tickets or reimbursements can only be made to an IBAN in the European banking system. Oversea money transactions to a German bank account are very expensive without an IBAN. The IBAN is an International Bank Account Number used for payments (such as transfers and direct debits) within Germany and the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA). Please check with your host family how to coordinate your money transfers before subscribing to a club or similar. For the withdraw of money from an account at home you can be charged fees, but these can be smaller than exchanging money. For cash or money transfers there are other options, like several companies: Western Union, MoneyGram, transferWise etc. Please check for their conditions.

### LETTERS, PACKAGES, SENDING SUITCASES NATIONWIDE



If you receive parcels from overseas or non-European countries, the sender must fill in a customs declaration. If they don't, it will most likely be held in customs. When receiving it or picking it up from the customs office, you are very likely to have to pay customs on your parcel, if the value exceeds a certain amount. Customs might sometimes be higher than the value of the content!

The "*Deutsche Post*" is the postal company most used by private customers in Germany. There are other companies that deal with parcels **or sending suitcases nationwide**, e.g., Hermes.

### PHONE CALLS and CELL PHONES

If you wish to use the host family landline to talk to your new friends in Germany or your family at home, check with them first if it is ok and how to use it, so costs are not excessive. The charges for the phone call are listed on the phone bill later.

Using a cell phone or smart phone you essentially have 2 options:



1.) Bring a phone: Europe uses different cell phone technology than other world regions. Phones purchased from certain carriers may be able to be "unlocked" and will work in Germany once a European SIM card is placed in the phone. Check with your carrier before leaving your home country to see if this is possible. This should work on most iPhones and some Androids.

2.) Buy a phone: A simple cell phone for calling and texting costs about 20 Euros. You can bring an iPhone or other smart phone and turn off cell service just to use for WIFI.

Either option: We recommend you use a pay-as-you go system and recharge your minutes and data either at the retailer where you bought the phone, or ATMs, post office, drug/grocery store, online, etc. Rates per minute and data (MB/GB) can vary. Many Germans actually do this as well as it's less of a headache than a contract.

**You should not sign a 2-year phone contract** or assume you can be put on your host family's plan. You should also make sure you get a German phone number and not just an international plan from your home provider. It will be much harder for your German family and friends to reach you if you do not have a German number as well. Most Germans use an app called WhatsApp for texting and calls that works over data or Wi-Fi. Your family back home can download this as well.

However, even with technology being omnipresent, **please remember to limit your contact as it really does hinder the adaptation process.** We've had feedback that some host families and students felt like they never formed a bond because students were in constant contact with their parents and friends back home every day and about every decision. Don't let that be you! Set up a set time weekly to chat or Videocall.

## EMERGENCY AND HEALTH SERVICES



If you are in **urgent** need of immediate medical attention over the weekend or during the night, **talk to your host family immediately**, if possible. If not, you can go to hospitals to the “*Ambulanz*” ward. Another option for help is the standardized nationwide telephone number 116 117 (no area code necessary) who finds doctors in private practice who treat patients in urgent medical cases on an emergency basis at night, on weekends and on public holidays. Callers end up at the control centres of the Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians. They will then tell you the nearest doctor's office to go to. The service does not apply to problems with teeth. You can find emergency dental services for every German state on the Internet.

**In emergencies you can call one of the following numbers: 110 (police) and 112 (emergencies)**

## DOCTORS

In Germany there are numerous types of doctors, from general doctors to specialists such as eye specialists, orthopaedist, etc. Most people have a family doctor. This doctor can transfer people to specialists if necessary. In certain cases, you can visit a specialist without consulting your family doctor first. Doctors have specific visiting hours when patients can seek their advice. It is always recommended to make an appointment as waiting times can be long.



## PHARMACIES AND MEDICINE

Prescription medicines can be bought at the “*Apotheke*” (pharmacies). Most medicines require a prescription from a doctor. The prescription drugs needed are listed on a “*Rezept*” (prescription) by the doctor. The prescription must be taken to a pharmacy and the pharmacist dispenses the medicines. Make sure to send the original prescription and the receipt to the insurance. **Please refer to your insurance policy, whether you are covered.**

## COVID-19 and CORONA VIRUS



The German ministry of health provides advice and information about Covid-19 on the webpage [Zusammen gegen Corona](#). The website is available in German and English and is updated regularly. For news about the rules currently applying in Germany, please follow the ministry of health's [Instagram](#) or [TikTok](#). The short videos you'll find there are easy to understand and always up to date. We also recommend to download the Corona-Warn-App. The App informs you in case a person you've been in touch with someone tested positive for Covid-19.

For **more general online information about Germany:**

<http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/de/>

or take a look at this page

<http://www.germany.travel/en/index.html>



