



Shinhidaka, Japan

2022 Lexington Sister Cities Student Exchange Application

Name: _____

School: _____

Age by July 1, 2022: _____

(Must be 13 by June 1, 2022)



Lexington Sister Cities
Deauville, County Kildare, Shinhidaka, Newmarket

Lexington Sister Cities
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507
859-258-3137

Sister Cities does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, national origin or sexual orientation in any of its programs, activities or operations.

Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program

Thank you for your interest in the 2022 Summer Student Exchange Program to Shinhidaka, Japan. The purpose of this exchange program is to provide genuine cultural and family experiences in another country for students of Lexington, Kentucky and those of Shinhidaka, Japan.

Student and parents/guardians must be willing and able to receive a Japanese student in their home for the same length of time that an American student is in Japan. This is not an exact exchange, meaning that students can be matched with an international counterpart for one portion of the exchange, and can be matched with a different counterpart for the other portion of the exchange.

To be selected for a Lexington Sister Cities student exchange program, applicants should exhibit maturity, flexibility, and interest in the Japanese culture, and qualities that would make them a good ambassador for Lexington, Kentucky and the United States of America.

Students must turn 13 by July 1, 2022 to participate in the program. **Please note that students over the age of 18 before August 1, 2022 will not be considered for this program.**

**Applications are due to Lexington Sister Cities
Friday, November 5, 2021.**

Please email a completed application and your letters of recommendation to lexingtonsistercities@gmail.com. You will receive a confirmation email once we have received your materials. You can also send in application materials to:

Lexington Sister Cities
200 E. Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Applications should include the following items:

- **Completed Lexington – Shinhidaka Student Exchange Application**
- **\$25 Application Fee** (Can be mailed to the Lexington Sister Cities office, or paid online via Credit Card or PayPal by visiting our website lexingtonsistercities.org)
- **Current Photo** (Headshot. Can be attached with the application or emailed to lexingtonsistercities@gmail.com)
- **Two Letters of Recommendation**
 - One letter should be from a teacher or counselor.
 - The second letter can be from a teacher, counselor, or personal reference.
 - Recommendation letters may be turned in separate from this application if necessary, and can be emailed to lexingtonsistercities@gmail.com. Letters should be received by the application deadline on Friday, November 5, 2021.

At the end of this application, you can find “Frequently Asked Questions” that explain the timeline and cost of the program. Please review this before submitting your application. After the application deadline, an interview date will be set up for candidates and parents. Our main form of communication is through email, so please ensure that all student and parents emails are accurate. Upon acceptance into the program, orientations will be held to prepare students for the exchange. **Orientations are mandatory for participation.**

Parents or guardians should sign Page 5, giving their student permission to submit this application.

Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program

2022 Student Exchange Application

NOTE TO APPLICANTS:

When matching you with a Japanese student, your application is the main resource the committee uses. Please be thorough, specific, and include as many interests or matching qualities as possible.

Email completed application to lexingtonsistercities@gmail.com to the Sister Cities Office.

Student Information:

Name _____
(List your FULL NAME as it does or will appear on your passport.)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Grade _____ School _____

Your Home:

Mother/Father/Parent #1 Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address (if different than yours) _____

Place of employment _____ Job title _____

E-mail _____

Mother/Father/Parent #2 Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address (if different than yours) _____

Place of employment _____ Job title _____

E-mail _____

Siblings:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

With whom do you live? _____

Are you able to host a student of the opposite gender? Yes No

What will the student's sleeping arrangements be during their stay in Lexington?

- Share a bedroom with counterpart
- Share a bedroom with sibling of same gender
- Have a private bedroom

Do you have any pets? If so, please list. _____

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About you:

Do you take Japanese? Yes No

(You do not have to be taking Japanese to apply for this program).

What are your favorite subjects in school?

What are your interests outside of school?

Do you play any sports or are you involved in any clubs/organizations? Please list:

Describe your personality.

Why do you want to participate in the Lexington – Shinhidaka Student Exchange?

Why do you think you would be a good candidate for the Lexington – Shinhidaka Student Exchange?

What are your plans for hosting your student?

Have you ever hosted an exchange student before? Yes No

If yes, describe your experience.

Have you ever traveled without your family? Yes No

If yes, to where and how long?

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Are you applying for Governor's Scholar Program or Governor's School for the Arts this year? Yes No
(NOTE: GSP and GSA directly coincide with this program – you will not be able to do both.)

Are you participating in any summer programs? Yes No
If yes, explain what programs and dates:

Do you have any allergies or medical conditions? Yes No
If yes, please list:

For Parents:

What do you think your responsibilities to this student will be?

Describe your family rules.

Do you give permission for your child to be photographed, either individually or as a group, during their exchange experience? Yes No

Parent/Guardian Permission:

I/We, _____, parent/guardian to _____, hereby give permission for my/our child to submit the enclosed application for the 2019 Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program Guidelines for Letter of Recommendation

Student Name _____

To the Recommender:

This student is applying for the Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange for summer of 2022. If chosen, the student will travel to Shinhidaka, Japan for 10 days to experience Japanese culture and everyday life. In addition, the student will host their Japanese counterpart in Lexington for 5-7 days. Your candid evaluation of the student's propensity for a successful experience abroad is an important part of their application. We ask that you be honest and specific about your recommendation for this student.

Students are evaluated based on:

- Their motivation for travel and participation in our program
- Flexibility in handling new or difficult situations
- Hosting and family support
- Ability to be a good ambassador for Lexington, Kentucky, and their school.
- Character
- Leadership; Community & School Involvement
- Maturity
- Interest in cultural diversity

Please attach this form to your letter.

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

Subject Taught: _____

Years you have known this student: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Letters of Recommendation are due by November 5, 2021.

Please email letter to:

lexingtonsistercities@gmail.com

Lexington Sister Cities
200 E. Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Thank you for your insights and support of the program.
Your assistance helps us create a wonderful experience for the Shinhidaka and Lexington students.

Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program Guidelines for Letter of Recommendation

Student Name _____

To the Recommender:

This student is applying for the Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange for summer of 2022. If chosen, the student will travel to Shinhidaka, Japan for 10 days to experience Japanese culture and everyday life. In addition, the student will host their Japanese counterpart in Lexington for 5-7 days. Your candid evaluation of the student's propensity for a successful experience abroad is an important part of their application. We ask that you be honest and specific about your recommendation for this student.

Students are evaluated based on:

- Their motivation for travel and participation in our program
- Flexibility in handling new or difficult situations
- Hosting and family support
- Ability to be a good ambassador for Lexington, Kentucky, and their school.
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Please attach this form to your letter.

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

Subject Taught: _____

Years you have known this student: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Letters of Recommendation are due by November 5th, 2021.

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Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How long is the exchange?**
 - a. Shinhidaka students visit Lexington for 5-6 days; Lexington students travel to Shinhidaka for 10-12 days.
2. **What are the dates for the exchange?**
 - a. While we do not have exact dates for the exchange, we can give some approximate time frames. Shinhidaka students visit Lexington near the end of March, usually around March 25-31. Lexington students will travel to Shinhidaka in July.
3. **Does my student have to be taking Japanese to participate in the Shinhidaka Exchange?**
 - a. Students do not have to be taking Japanese to participate in the exchange.
4. **Can my student apply for two Sister Cities programs?**
 - a. No – students should only submit one application to Sister Cities. Students will not be considered for multiple programs.
5. **Is there a chaperone for the students?**
 - a. Yes. The chaperone is usually a teacher or member of Lexington Sister Cities. They will be available at orientations for parents and students to meet and get to know.
6. **Whom will my student stay with during the exchange?**
 - a. Your student will be matched with a student from Shinhidaka that they will host in Lexington. It is possible they will also be staying with that student's family in Shinhidaka; however, it could be a different host family.
7. **How are the host families in Shinhidaka selected?**
 - a. The Sister Cities Committee in Shinhidaka selects their host families in a similar process to ours. Because Shinhidaka is a much smaller town, the committee members usually know the families even before selection.
8. **How much does the exchange cost?**
 - a. Other than the \$25 application fee, the cost will be between \$2,000 and \$2,200, depending on current airline prices. Upon acceptance, a \$200 non-refundable deposit is due to Sister Cities. Once the airfare is found and held by the travel agent, payment will be due to Sister Cities. If necessary, payment plans can be arranged. However, the full amount of the airline ticket will be due at least 90 days from departure. Scholarships are available for financial need – the scholarship application can be found on our website.
9. **What are some other costs we may incur?**
 - a. Other costs include spending money for gifts, souvenirs, et cetera, as well as obtaining a passport if they do not have one.
10. **When are the interviews for the exchange?**
 - a. Interviews will be scheduled either mid-November or early December. Interviews will last about 30 minutes per family. If possible, both parents/guardians should attend the interview.
11. **What happens after my student gets selected?**
 - a. The Lexington-Shinhidaka Committee will inform the student and their parents at the interview when the acceptances will be emailed out to the students. Once the student receives their acceptance email, they will be given a date to accept their spot in the program. This date is usually 24-48 hours after the acceptance email is sent.
 - b. Once students have accepted their spot in the program, a \$200 non-refundable deposit is due at the first orientation. This will be applied towards the airfare.
 - c. Orientations will start in February. **ORIENTATIONS ARE MANDATORY** for participation in the program. At least one parent should attend each meeting with their student.

Lexington-Shinhidaka Student Exchange Program

12. What is provided to my student while they are in Japan?

- a. While your student is in Japan, accommodation and meals will be provided by the host family. Exceptions may include if the students are out together and they get ice cream/coffee/etc. This would be something your student would use spending money on.

13. What are we expected to provide for the Shinhidaka student while they are in Lexington?

- a. While the Shinhidaka student is in Lexington, you are expected to provide meals and accommodations. Treat them as an additional child in your family – anything you would pay for your own child, you should pay for the Shinhidaka student as well.

14. What if my student gets sick while in Japan?

- a. Just as you would care for a sick child in your home, so will your student's host family. We ask that you check with your insurance company before your child departs to make sure you are covered for international expenses.

15. Are there group activities planned by Sister Cities?

- a. Yes – both in Japan and in Lexington the committees plan group activities and dinners.

16. Can my child drive while in Japan?

- a. No.

17. Can my child drive their Shinhidaka student while in Lexington?

- a. Yes, if they have a valid driver's license that permits them to drive others in his/her car.

18. Can I call/email/text my child while they are in Japan?

- a. Yes – BUT we prefer that this is done only occasionally.

19. How does the committee decide how to match the students?

- a. We gather information from both applications and the Lexington student's interview to try and match based on common interests, age & gender (if you have specified you cannot host a student of the opposite gender, you will not be expected to), and other specifications such as pet allergies.

20. My child is hoping their counterpart will end up being their best friend. Is this the case?

- a. While many great, lasting friendships have been made on our exchange programs, not every match is perfect. Both committees do their best to match the students, but sometimes the students do not end up being best friends. However, they are both still provided with a great opportunity to have a cultural experience that they should take advantage of, regardless of their similarities to their counterpart.