

MOUNTAIN VIEW SISTER CITY



STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Since 1976 the Mountain View Sister City student exchange program has successfully enabled students from Mountain View to experience life in a different culture and make life-long friends in Japan.

Mountain View students will spend approximately 10 days in Iwata with their host student and family. You will experience life in Japan and enjoy typical traditions and customs of a Japanese high school student.

Your host student will return with you from Japan and spend approximately 10 days in Mountain View with you and your family. You will share your life, family, and favorite activities, with your exchange student.

For more information on the MVSC Student Exchange Program, please contact: sistercity.mv@gmail.com



IWATA, JAPAN

Iwata City is located in the center of Japan, on the eastern bank of the Tenryu River in Shizuoka Prefecture and faces the Enshu Nada Sea.

Iwata has expanded to an industrial city but still maintains its agricultural roots in green tea and “Iwata melons”. The Yamaha Corporation was founded in Iwata and maintains a strong presence in the city today. Iwata is also home to the professional soccer team Júbilo Iwata, as well as the Yamaha Jubilo, a rugby team.

Region:	Chibu
Prefecture:	Shizuoka
Population:	169,897
Area:	63 sq mi



PROGRAM DETAILS

ELIGIBILITY

The Student Exchange Program is open to the following applicants:

1. STATUS: High School students entering freshman up through a junior.
 - Entering freshman is defined as any student who has graduated from Middle School and will be 14 years old by July 1st.
2. RESIDENCY: One of the following:
 - Student attending a High School within the cities of Mountain View or Los Altos
 - A resident of Mountain View

COSTS AND FUNDRAISING

Typical program expenses for hosting and airfare are approximately \$3000 per student. Fundraising activities are selected and coordinated by the students and families and are mandatory. In past years the fundraising activities have been able to raise the funds needed to cover over 75% of the expenses for hosting and airfare.

Travel to Japan: Students & Advisor

Program Expenses Covered by Fundraising

- International airfare to Japan and any inter-city travel required
- Lodging, meals, activities, and transportation
- Travel and Medical insurance

Family Expenses

- Gifts for the families in Japan
- Personal purchases or souvenirs
- All travel and expenses outside of the hosting period
- Any program expenses not covered by fundraising are the responsibility of the Mountain View exchange student family.

Hosting in Mountain View: Students & Advisor

Program Expenses Covered by Fundraising

- Group program activities and some meals
- Lodging for an overnight during the hosting period

Family Expenses

- “Family Day” expenses. Family days are typically days where the exchange students spend time with their host family. Expenses during this time are not covered by the program.
- Meals at home
- Personal purchases or gifts
- Any program expenses not covered by fundraising are the responsibility of the Mountain View exchange student family.

Other Expenses: Background checks for adult(s) in applicant’s family



APPLICATION & EVENTS TIMELINE

APRIL 4TH

GENERAL INFORMATION SESSION

APRIL 26TH

APPLICATION DEADLINE

- Items Required
 - Completed Online application
 - 2 Recommendations

MAY 13TH – 18TH

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

MAY 20TH – 25TH

FAMILY HOME VISITS

JUNE 1ST

APPLICANT RESULTS ANNOUNCED

JUNE 10TH

PAPERWORK AND DEPOSIT DUE

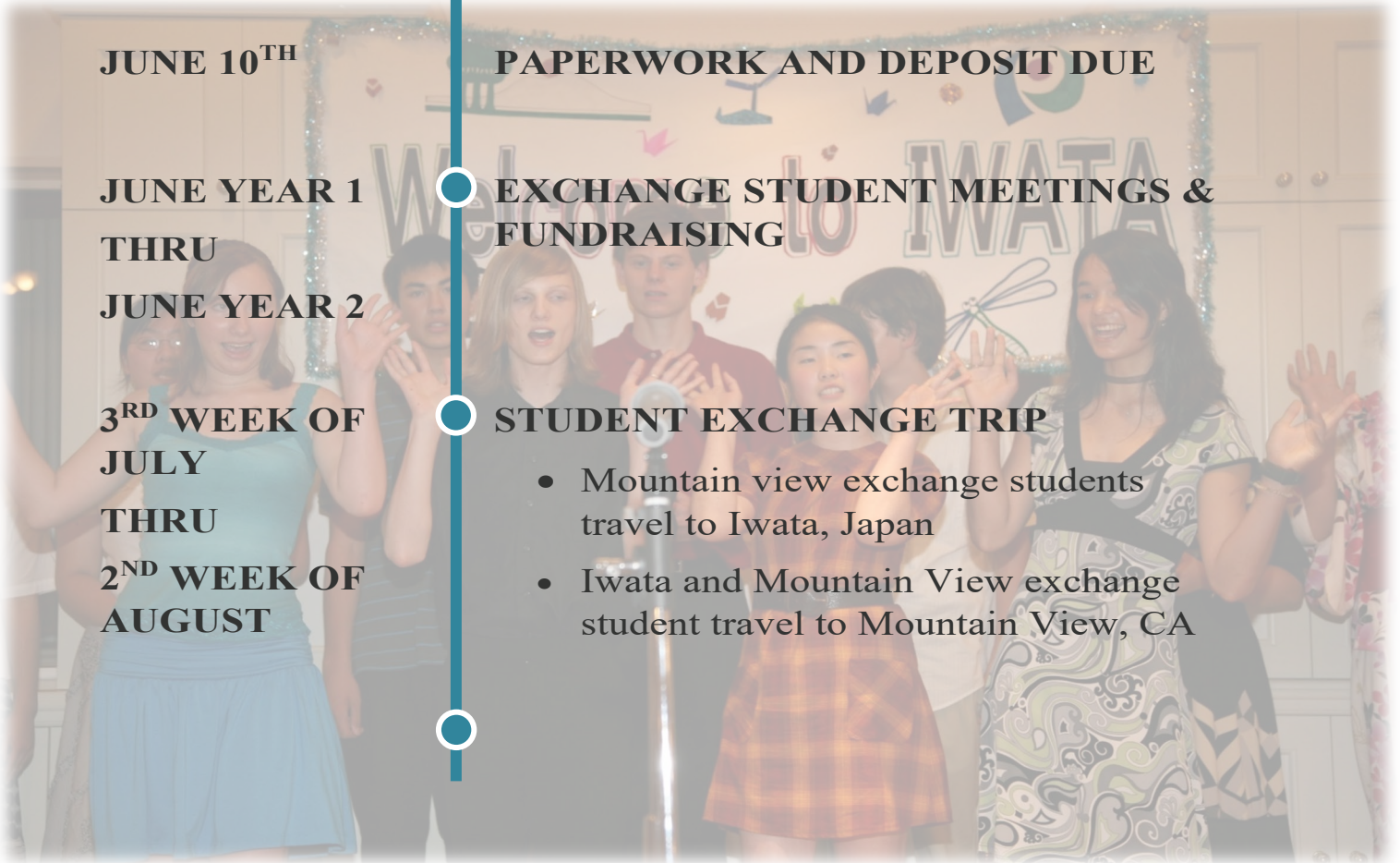
**JUNE YEAR 1
THRU
JUNE YEAR 2**

**EXCHANGE STUDENT MEETINGS &
FUNDRAISING**

**3RD WEEK OF
JULY
THRU
2ND WEEK OF
AUGUST**

STUDENT EXCHANGE TRIP

- Mountain view exchange students travel to Iwata, Japan
- Iwata and Mountain View exchange student travel to Mountain View, CA



APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION

1. Submit an online application and two recommendations from teachers, coaches, supervisors, etc. Application and recommendation forms will be available during the application period on the MVSC website. (<https://www.mountainview.gov/our-city/about-mountain-view/sister-cities/student-exchange-opportunities>)
2. Participate in a student interview with the MV Sister City Board
3. Participate in a family in-home interview with MV Sister City Board Members

PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE

Upon Acceptance into the Mountain View Sister City Student Exchange Program the following will be required:

- Join the Mountain View Sister City Family Membership (\$30)
- Sign the Student/Parent Agreement
- Due upon acceptance is a non-refundable deposit of \$1000. These funds will be credited to the student for travel to Iwata. Scholarship assistance is available.
- Student Health & Emergency Form
- Student Behavioral Contract
- Liability Release Form
- Note: Students joining the Exchange Student Program after fundraising activities have started may be asked to make an additional financial contribution.

STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENT

Commit to a minimum 15-month period in an active role in the Mountain View Sister City Student Exchange Program, including the following:

- Preparation for travel to Iwata in July/August of the exchange year.
- Preparation and participation in hosting the exchange students from Iwata in July/August of the exchange year.
- Attending student and parent meetings as scheduled, at least twice per month.
- Participation in fundraising activities is mandatory. Any expenses not covered by the fundraising activities are the responsibility of the exchange student family.
- Participation in the MVSC Annual Dinners is mandatory (this is a major fundraiser for the Program).
- Each parent must complete a background check and the Reporter Volunteer Training mandated by California's AB 506 requirements.
- Obtain a passport and provide all the appropriate paperwork by the required deadlines.
- Agree to always follow Sister City rules.
- Help to recruit students for the next exchange program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How many students from Mountain View will be going to Iwata?

- Typically, 5-6 students are selected for the student exchange program.

2. Is there a quota for high school students or gender?

- There are no quotas placed on student participants. MVSC selects participants solely based upon the quality of the applicant.

3. Who are the exchange program advisors?

- Advisors are adults over 25 and may be a teacher, parent, past student, or other adult who are interested in the student exchange program. They are interviewed and selected based on their interest and experience in working with students and excited to assist students with a cultural experience

4. Why are candidates interviewed?

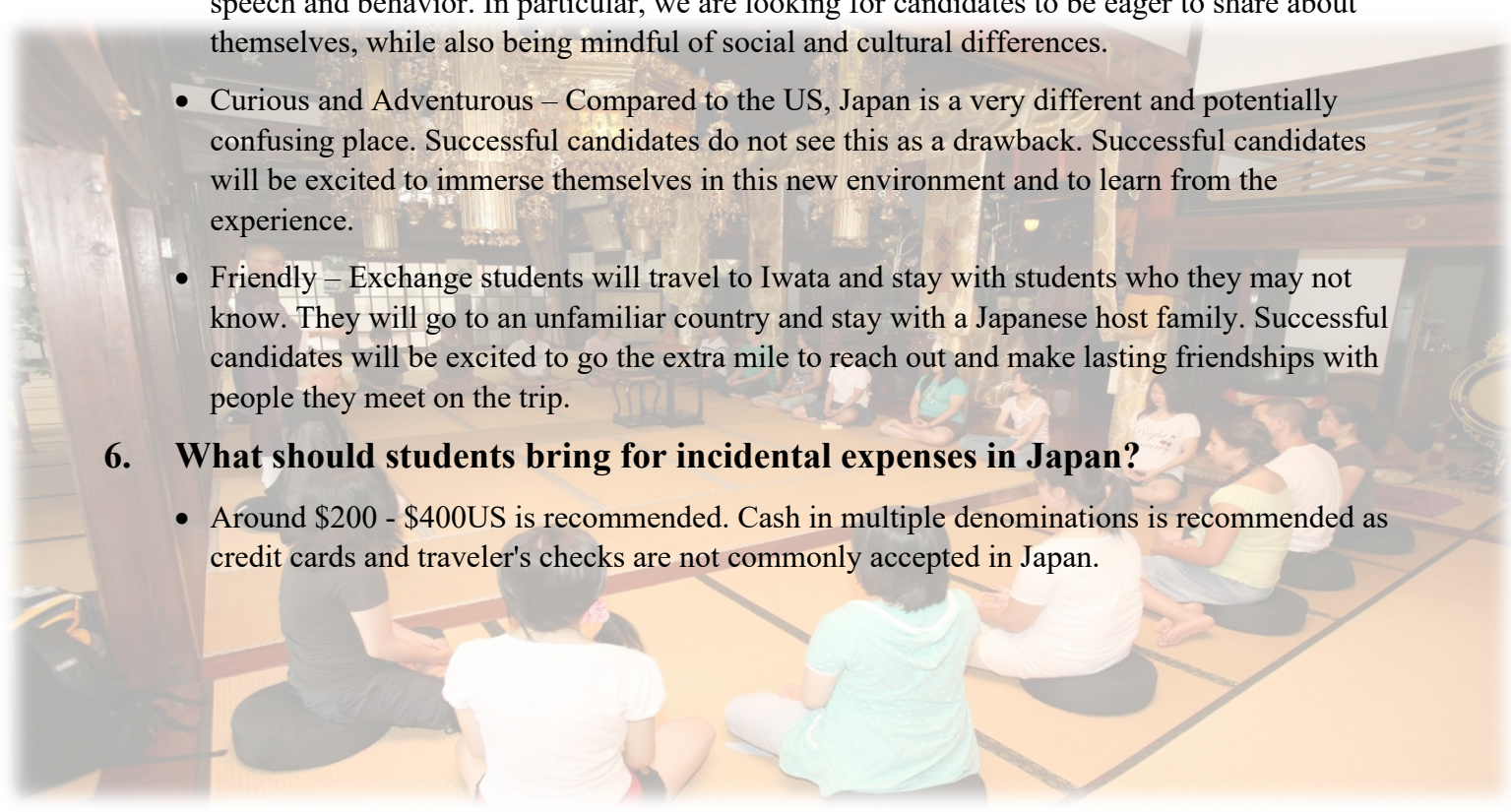
- Interviews are very important in evaluating the interest level, maturity, and personality of an applicant. Interviews are especially important when there are more applicants than available spots in the program.

5. What does MVSC look for in a successful candidate?

- Be an Ambassador – Sharing cultures is a pillar of MVSC’s Student Exchange program.
- Successful candidates will be excited to represent the best of our City, State and Nation in speech and behavior. In particular, we are looking for candidates to be eager to share about themselves, while also being mindful of social and cultural differences.
- Curious and Adventurous – Compared to the US, Japan is a very different and potentially confusing place. Successful candidates do not see this as a drawback. Successful candidates will be excited to immerse themselves in this new environment and to learn from the experience.
- Friendly – Exchange students will travel to Iwata and stay with students who they may not know. They will go to an unfamiliar country and stay with a Japanese host family. Successful candidates will be excited to go the extra mile to reach out and make lasting friendships with people they meet on the trip.

6. What should students bring for incidental expenses in Japan?

- Around \$200 - \$400US is recommended. Cash in multiple denominations is recommended as credit cards and traveler's checks are not commonly accepted in Japan.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7. Where can we exchange US Dollars for Japanese Yen?

- Many banks in Mountain View and the bay area offer foreign currency exchange service to their customers. Consult your bank to find out the details.
- USD to Yen may also be exchanged at airports, banks and post offices in Japan.

8. Is Japan safe?

- In general, Japan is very safe place for travel. Iwata is near the sea and even safer than Tokyo. Host families in Iwata are carefully selected by Iwata Sister City Affiliation Board.

9. Do Mountain View exchange students need to know Japanese?

- No. Students will learn about Japan before their trip. They will learn about the culture, customs, etiquette, and some Japanese words prepare them for their experience in Japan.

10. Will Iwata exchange students speak English?

- Not necessarily. While most students in Japan do study English, their skill level may be very limited, but they will be prepped in a similar way as our students before they come to the States.

11. How can the students communicate if they don't speak the same language?

- Students can be very creative in communicating without being fluent in a common language.

12. Do the Mountain View exchange families have to host Iwata exchange students?

- Yes, families in the MV Student Exchange Program are obligated to host Iwata students after travelling to Japan.

13. What do host families need to know to make a pleasant stay for the Iwata exchange students?

- MVSC Student Exchange Programs aim to provide exciting experiences by immersing students in a new and different culture. To this end, we highly encourage you to immerse your exchange student in your everyday family life.
- You should help your exchange student experience life in the US by sharing your favorite places and activities. You will also need to learn about your exchange student's interests and endeavor to share a US experience of that interest.
- You should make your exchange student a part of your family. Including your student in mundane family activities such as grocery shopping, helping in the kitchen, having a family dinner, and daily chores may make them feel like they are a member of the family instead of just a guest.

