



# International Program 2023-2024 Student Handbook

*Oak Grove Lutheran School • Fargo, North Dakota*



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*Visit [oakgrovelutheran.com/international](http://oakgrovelutheran.com/international) for more information including forms, applications, and policies.*

# Oak Grove Lutheran School

**Type of School:** Oak Grove Lutheran School is a private college preparatory school affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The school operates an elementary, middle and high school program on two campuses in Fargo, North Dakota.

**Academics:** Oak Grove’s high school academic program includes Advanced Placement (AP) classes and dual credit opportunities.

**Rated as one of the “Top 50 Best Christian High Schools in America” by [www.thebestschools.org](http://www.thebestschools.org)!**

**Rated the #1 Private School in North Dakota since 2018 by Niche.com.**

**Accreditation:** Fully accredited academic program maintaining NCA-CASI accreditation with high standards for excellence since 1926. “Accredited with Commendation” from the State of North Dakota, achieving 100% of all required standards.

**Location:** Oak Grove Lutheran School is located in Fargo, North Dakota, which is on the state line of Minnesota and North Dakota along the Red River. The Fargo-Moorhead metro area population is 261,613. For more than 118 years, Oak Grove’s campus has been located in a beautiful park-like setting. Oak Grove is within minutes of public libraries, parks, shopping centers, theaters, and several colleges and universities. The area has more than 350 restaurants, hundreds of brand-name retail stores, 26 movie screens, concerts by the biggest names in music, and minor league professional sports teams. The twin cities of Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, have become one of the hottest young boomtowns in America. *Money* magazine named Fargo-Moorhead one of its top 10 cities in which to start a business or get a job, and the Los Angeles Times described the “other” twin cities as improbably stylish, worldly, and even luxurious. Our downtown is rated the **7th best in the country!**

**Enrollment:** Oak Grove’s enrolls approximately 180 High School, 170 Middle School, and 340 Elementary students, 78 Pre-school/PreK annually, for a total of just over 730 students with an average class size of 15 in the high school and an overall student-to-teacher ratio of 12:1.

**Extra-curricular Offerings:** Oak Grove offers a full range of extra-curricular opportunities, including leadership opportunities, Debate, Drama, Key Club, PAY Club, Student Council, Theatre and Musical productions. Athletics: Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, Trap Team, Track and Field, Golf, Robotics, Board Game Club, Cross Country, Tennis, Soccer, Wrestling, Hockey, Gymnastics, Softball, Swimming & Diving, Fishing (Angling) and eSports.

# International Program

**Housing for Students:** Oak Grove Lutheran School arranges friendly and welcoming host families for students accepted from other countries. Oak Grove does not have dormitories. Students are welcome to live with their natural parents/family. Students are not allowed to live only with siblings or live alone, regardless of age.

**International Assistance:** Oak Grove provides an International Coordinator to support students with daily needs, cultural integration, and basic communication assistance and organization.

**Flight Information:** Students should arrive at Hector International Airport in Fargo (FAR), about a 10-minute drive from our campus **within 10 days and no later than 5 days before** the start date of the school year. This is recommended for all international students, both new and returning. Students are expected to depart from Hector International Airport **within 7 days after the last day of school.**

**School Year Calendar:** Classes begin near the end of August and conclude near the end of May. International students are expected to make flight arrangements to return to their home country within 7 days after the last day of school. In the case of graduates who have been accepted into a post-secondary college or university prior to the last day of school at Oak Grove, they are required to leave their host family's home within 7 days after graduation even if they do not plan to return to their home country. Such students are responsible for arranging their own living accommodations with the school they will attend. In no way should any student make private arrangements with Oak Grove host families, outside of their high school program contract. **Please visit [oakgrovelutheran.com](http://oakgrovelutheran.com) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page for Oak Grove's complete school year calendar.**

**Activities and Athletics:** International students are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one or more activities outside the classroom. Oak Grove provides opportunities for international students to participate in numerous athletic teams, musical ensembles, academic teams, and campus ministry/mission trips. Additional fees for activities may apply. The purpose of participating in such activities is to enrich the student's cultural experience, integrate foreign students with American students, build friendships, and foster a teamwork mentality. It has been found that participating in such activities will also increase the English language acquisition process.

# Student Application Process

International students interested in applying for International student admission at Oak Grove Lutheran School can download an application at <https://www.oakgrovelutheran.com/international>. For more information regarding admission, please contact Kristi Kegel, International Program Coordinator, at [kristi.kegel@oakgrovelutheran.com](mailto:kristi.kegel@oakgrovelutheran.com) or **+1-701-373-7115** or cell phone +1-701-212-5296.

Completed application and application materials can be sent to:

Oak Grove Lutheran School  
Attention: Kristi Kegel  
124 North Terrace  
Fargo, ND 58102 USA

Oak Grove Lutheran does not offer any EL or ESL courses; thus we expect strong English proficiency when entering our program. The following 2 test options will help us determine English proficiency along with before school testing conducted by Oak Grove.

International Students are required to have taken the IELTS Academic test or Toefl test prior to applying for admissions. These tests assist in the admission process, helping Oak Grove's Administration determine whether a student is prepared for English immersion.

The following website will give you information on the Toefl. <http://www.toeflgoanywhere.org>. Click on the bottom of this page under "Test Dates." Click on your country. The following website will give you information on the IELTS. <https://www.ielts.org/>. Click on "Book a Test" and find a test location.

Additional testing will be administered upon arrival to Oak Grove prior to your first day of school or your first week of school.

Students must undertake the following to be considered for the international program:

- Provide IELTS or Toefl tests documentation and score
- Complete Oak Grove Lutheran School's International Student Application Form, Health Physical Form, and Computer Release Contract Form
- Provide official academic transcripts for the past 3 years, both in native language and an officially translated English copy, and complete Oak Grove's Grade and Attendance Forms, for each year
- Provide certificate of health and immunization history both in native language and an officially translated English copy
- Provide a minimum of 2 teacher recommendations
- Provide proof of international medical insurance (this can be obtained upon arrival in the U.S.)
- Provide application fee
- Complete 1-3 Skype interviews with Oak Grove's International Coordinator. Skype interviews, along with the above items, will help determine your English proficiency and likely success.

# International Student Information

## *Coming to Oak Grove*

- Oak Grove requires students have an eye and dental exam and complete any dental work before coming to the United States.
- Students need to pack clothing for cold winter weather. The average temperature in September is 20°C, January is -15°C, and May is 20°C.
- Before travel arrangements are made, travel dates and times must be approved by Oak Grove's International Coordinator. International students are expected to arrive 7-10 days prior to the start of the school year and expected to leave within one week after school is out. Other arrangements beyond those terms will not be arranged or accepted by Oak Grove or any person involved with Oak Grove's international program, including but not limited to Oak Grove students, past or present host families, or other parents involved at any capacity with Oak Grove.
- Immunization documentation must be provided prior to arrival in Fargo for all international students who attend Oak Grove. Students may not start school before these documents are received and approved. This is for the health and safety of the international students, as well as other Oak Grove students. Please refer to the "International Student Immunization Requirement" section for more information. If the student does not meet the immunization requirements, the required immunizations will be provided locally and at the student's expense.
- Students must have a physical examination completed before arriving in the United States. An official record or proof of the examination, which is signed by the physician, must be submitted to Oak Grove Administration. If this is not done prior to the student's arrival, a physical will be provided at the student's expense for medical clearance. If the student does not pass the medical exam or has a medical condition (such as pregnancy) that is not conducive to continuing at Oak Grove, the student will be sent home on the earliest flight and at the student's expense. Tuition will not be refunded.
- Once on campus, students who scored satisfactory on both the IELTS/Toefl test and the ND ESL placement test will register for classes with Oak Grove's Guidance Counselor. Translated transcripts and course descriptions must be provided for this process. These documents will be used to aid in proper class selections. Students who scored below satisfactory on either test will have classes assigned that best suit their individual needs.
- **All documentation must arrive with appropriate English translations 30 days after acceptance. All documentation must be submitted to our International Coordinator prior to the student's arrival in Fargo.**

# Expectations of International Students

- International students are expected to perform academically, and act appropriately and respectfully at all times while attending Oak Grove, in accordance with the Student Handbook, and while living with a host family. Students are to follow all policies and procedures within the Student Handbook, the International Program Student Handbook and Host Family Handbook.
- Oak Grove Lutheran School arranges for international students to live with a host family. The host family provides students with room and board (a home and meals), and a loving atmosphere. They are also there to answer questions students have about life in the USA. We encourage and expect international students to engage in family activities, meetings and meals.
- All international students are required to provide proof of current and valid international medical insurance or to enroll in an insurance program upon arrival in the United States. Additional fees to enroll in an insurance program will apply. Students who purchase insurance once in the United States and attend Oak Grove for more than one year must hold their insurance policy on a 12-month basis (no lapses in insurance coverage may occur).
- Students must pay for all medical bills (not covered by their insurance) and all long-distance telephone charges. All students should use Oak Grove's school address as their mailing address for any business mail (i.e. hospital, bank, cell phone, health insurance, etc.) If a student leaves with outstanding debts, the student's natural family is responsible for immediate payment of these debts. Transcripts and school records will not be released until all debt is paid.
- Students must have access to appropriate spending money for their time in the United States. A minimum of \$500 should be in a bank account or accessible at all times in case of an emergency. Activities, fees and other expenses are the responsibility of the student, not the host family. International students are encouraged to come with a Visa or MasterCard, which provides access to money for such expenses.
- Oak Grove Lutheran School is an English-speaking school. It is the expectation that all international students speak English while attending Oak Grove.
- Students are required to have a **pocket translator** to be used in school. Cell phone use will NOT be allowed in the classrooms for classwork. Neither headphones nor airpods will be allowed in the classroom or in the hallways. It is important to engage in English language speaking and listening.
- Students wishing to get a driver's license while in the states must have permission from their natural parents and from their host family. Both must agree to obtain a license. Host families are not obligated to allow the student to use their vehicle for this process.

- All students are required to live with a host family or with natural parents/family if they reside in Fargo/Moorhead. No student will be allowed to live on their own or with a sibling, regardless of age.
- Students must conduct themselves with respect and reflect a positive attitude toward their host family as well as Oak Grove faculty and staff at all times. Failure to show respectful behavior and/or positive attitude may result in a probation letter. Failure to make acceptable changes as outlined in the probation letter may result in termination from the program. See “Probation” section for more information. Oak Grove does not reimburse program fees or tuition for students who have been terminated or withdraw from the program for any reason.
- Students will adhere to all host family house rules; this includes, but is not limited to curfew, internet use, telephone and electronic use in the room or outside the room, chores and all other reasonable house rules.
- Students are required to have a local/US phone number to ensure simple and easy communication between the school and the student or the host family and the student.
- Oak Grove’s International Program tuition and fees are to be submitted by August 1 and **MUST** be paid prior to the student’s attendance in class in the United States. Please contact Oak Grove’s Director of Finance, Nicky Bogenreif, at 1.701.373.7146 or [nicky.bogenreif@oak-grovelutheran.com](mailto:nicky.bogenreif@oak-grovelutheran.com) for more information. Money wiring instructions can be provided upon request and they are on the Oak Grove website as well.
- International students are not to make any life or body-altering decisions/choices while a part of Oak Grove’s International Program, including but not limited to: tattoos, body piercings, hair coloring, illegal social behaviors, or sexual activity/pregnancy.

## Student Travel

- Oak Grove’s academic programming may provide outings and field trips for the students throughout the school year.
- Oak Grove’s International Coordinator will organize monthly activities and outings for the students to participate in.
- Overnight vacations require advance written permission from both natural parents and host parents. Oak Grove’s Administration must approve, in advance, trips involving absence from school.
- Travel within the United States outside of official school functions must be with an approved group or to visit persons known both by the student and the natural parents. Oak Grove’s International Coordinator must receive written approval (email is acceptable if sent directly from the natural parents to the coordinator) for the student’s plan of travel. The host family must also send a communication to the International Coordinator indicating they are aware of the travel plan.

The student must provide the International Coordinator with an email or other document with the following information for the person with which he/she will be staying:

1) Full name; 2) Relationship to the student; 3) Email; 4) Phone number; 5) Address of where student will be staying; 6) Members of the household/persons the student will be staying with; 7) Basic outline of plans for the visit; and 8) Dates of the travel

- First-year international students will not be allowed to travel home or within the US unless it is a family emergency. Students may not travel unless it is with their host families. All other international students may travel to visit family and friends if they are maintaining a C in each of their classes and are demonstrating successful academic behaviors. If the student is on academic probation, travel may not be approved.
- Students traveling with their host families should expect to pay their own way. A host family who invites or plans a family trip with the student should be very clear (from the earliest planning stages of the trip) regarding the cost of the trip. Host families are encouraged to take international students on family trips.
- Students of any age must have approval to travel alone or with underage friends. Any absence from school or from the host family must be reported to the school's administration and may be grounds for disciplinary action, including possible dismissal.
- Unauthorized travel may be cause for dismissal from the program.

***Note: When traveling, international students must carry their F-1 Visa, passport, proof of insurance, immunization record, as well as their current, valid I-20 with them at all times.***

## Moving a Student

Oak Grove Lutheran School understands that not all problems can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Should problems persist between the student and the host family, it may be necessary to move the student from their host family's home. This move may be at the request of the student or host family and must be submitted in writing explaining the situation of concern in detail. Any written requests must be signed, dated, and submitted to the International Coordinator prior to moving the student. Oak Grove's International Coordinator must be involved in any moving of a student. Host families may not dismiss a student from their home without first contacting the International Coordinator. Students may not leave the home without first contacting the International Coordinator. Oak Grove will make every effort to find a new placement for a student as soon as possible. However, if a situation arises in which either party feels threatened, appropriate measures will take place immediately by Oak Grove.

# Probation

International students are expected to perform academically, and act appropriately and respectfully at all times while attending Oak Grove, in accordance with the Student Handbook, and while living with a host family. An international student will be placed on probation if academic or disciplinary issues arise and will be given time to show improvement.

Examples:

- If a student is caught cheating they will receive a 0 on that assignment or test.
- If a student is caught sleeping in class they will be assigned detention.
- It is expected a student will maintain a C in each of the classes at Oak Grove. Failure to do so may result in probation and/or dismissal. (First year students will be allowed the first quarter to adjust to culture and academic style).
- A student must attend classes as required in Oak Grove's Student Handbook.
- Probation is a period in which Oak Grove will determine whether the student will make behavioral or academic changes deemed necessary to stay within the program. A probation letter from the Principal will outline expectations, while giving a time frame for improvement, giving the student every opportunity to improve in the areas identified. Probation letters will be signed by the international student; refusal to sign a probation letter may result in immediate termination of the student from the Oak Grove International Program. The conditions and length of probation are determined by Oak Grove. A copy will be provided to the student, host family and natural family.
- If all conditions of the probation letter have been met during the probation period, the international student will return to good academic or disciplinary standing and will be allowed to continue in the International Program. If the student does not meet the conditions of the probation letter by the end of the probationary period and has not shown improvement, further actions may be taken in regard to their current and future enrollment in the International Program at Oak Grove.

# Dismissal

International students can be dismissed for any unacceptable behavior or violation of Oak Grove's Student Handbook or the International Program Student Handbook and Host Family Handbook that the Administration deems appropriate. Student dismissal is a decision of the Oak Grove Administration. Notification of dismissal will be forwarded to the student's natural family, whereupon the student's F-1 Visa will be terminated and the student will be requested to return to his/her country. In most cases, the international student and natural family will receive warning about possible dismissal from the program or the student being placed on probation. However, Oak Grove reserves the right to dismiss a student immediately if the Administration deems it appropriate.

Immediate dismissal may occur in any of the following cases:

- Use of drugs or alcohol, smoking or vaping
- Violation of city, state or federal laws
- Sustained behavior counter to the standards and expectations of Oak Grove
- Inappropriate behavior toward the host family or within the host family home
- Student engages in sexual activity
- Serious violation of Oak Grove's Student Handbook or the Respect & Protect Policy

*Please refer to the Student Handbook for all school rules and regulations. Please note – in all cases of dismissal, Oak Grove will make every effort to support the student, during this timeframe, thus ensuring that students have been given a fair opportunity to remain in the program. No reimbursement of tuition, fees, or payments of any kind will be given upon the voluntary withdrawal or dismissal of a student.*