**Riverdale Collegiate Institute**

**Nara Women’s University Secondary School**

**Student Exchange Program**

Riverdale Collegiate Institute (RCI) and Nara Women’s University Secondary School (NWUSS) in Nara, Japan have initiated a partnership which includes an agreement to participate in a reciprocal exchange between a select number of students.

The purpose of the program is to encourage greater understanding between the youth of Japan and Canada and to foster long-term and ongoing interest in one another by providing firsthand experiences with the culture, language and education systems of each country.

RCI and NWUSS have each agreed to identify 4 students and their families to participate for the 2019-2020 school year. The format of this exchange will be a reciprocal direct exchange lasting approximately 8 weeks in each location. The Japanese students will live here with their hosts and attend RCI from November until December 27th. Canadian students will live in Nara and attend NWUSS from December 28th until Family Day in February.

While traveling, students are expected to be welcomed into their host family and to be immersed in the culture and environment as much as possible. Students will attend classes at their host school but will not pursue credits there. Schedules will be arranged to reflect the visiting students’ level of language, interest and abilities.

The expected cost for the exchange is approximately $2300. This will cover flights to and from Japan, transit and ground transport to Nara as required. These costs would be based strictly on the actual cost of travel. **Financial support is available to families with financial need.**

While in Japan, students would need their own spending money but any travel within Japan while on exchange would be at the discretion of the host family and costs would be covered by the host family. Similarly, while hosting a student from Japan, host families would be expected to “show them around” and cover those costs. There may be a need to cover some transportation costs.

**Program Costs:**

• Approximately $2300 for return air travel, ground transport, transit and incidental fees. Final costs will reflect actual costs at time of booking. **Financial support is available to families.**

**Program Includes:**

• Roundtrip air transportation between Toronto and Osaka, Japan.

• Surface travel to Nara from Osaka as necessary.

• An 8 week homestay experience with a Japanese family.

• Hosting a Japanese student in your home for 8 weeks.

• Daily attendance at Nara Women’s University Secondary School.

**The Program Does Not Include:**

• Surface travel expenses to and from the airport in Canada .

• Excess baggage or overweight baggage fees.

• Passport (and visa if necessary) fees.

• Comprehensive Health and Travel Insurance (required)

• All personal expenses, such as spending money, gifts, souvenirs, personal needs, phone charges, etc. Expenses will vary depending on the spending habits and budget of each participant.

**Role of the Student:**

• This Exchange is meant to provide immersion in a foreign culture and language. To make the most of the opportunity, the participants should have a basic understanding of the language in which they will be immersed. **This includes committing to participating in language instruction before departure. This will include self-study during the summer.**

• All students are expected to participate in all activities during their stay in Japan and adhere to the rules of their host family. This will require open-mindedness, flexibility and a strong sense of curiosity.

• While the Japanese students are in Toronto, the host students are expected to help their guests integrate into life in Toronto, establish friendships and positively engage in life in and outside of school.

• Students are expected to make arrangements with their teachers as early as possible to make up any missed work or assignments. Students are expected to complete all assignments and meet all expectations of the course as determined by the teacher.

• If selected to participate, students and families are expected to commit to successfully completing the program.

**Role of Parents/Guardians:**

• Provide a safe, caring, welcoming and fun environment for the visiting student including appropriate sleeping and cleaning arrangements, nutritious food, emotional support and inclusion in family activities.

• Where appropriate, include the visiting student in your family life and traditions.

• Provide opportunities for the visiting student to experience as much of Canada and Canadian culture as possible.

• Provide a Criminal Reference Check for **each adult** who will reside in the home during the visit.

**Role of the School:**

• Coordinate selection of the participating students and their families.

• Ensure the host environment is safe and appropriate.

• Provide a timetable for the visiting student to attend school daily and effectively engage in school life.

• Support, as appropriate, visiting students in their transition to Canada.

• Coordinate the travel arrangements for their students.Provide for safe travel to Nara

Monitor progress of students before, during and after the exchange and provide support as necessary. Initiate disciplinary action, if necessary.

**Rules:**

• Students must follow the rules and expectations of their host family, the TDSB, Riverdale Collegiate and Nara Women’s University Secondary School.

• All Japanese and Canadian laws must be obeyed while in Japan.

• All participants must take part in activities that are scheduled for the whole program, including activities and classes provided by the host school and families. No private itineraries outside the approved schedule are allowed.

• The exchange is first and foremost an educational experience and, as such, only students, teachers, and Administrator-approved escorts are allowed to participate. Non-participant relatives and friends of students are not allowed to accompany or “shadow” the group, nor make arrangements to meet them in Japan.

• While in Japan, participants serve as cultural ambassadors for Canada. They must, therefore, behave with courtesy in all public locations, including places of lodging, and wear clothing that is modest and neat. Respectful conduct is especially important at temples and shrines, memorials, and places of quiet contemplation.

• Though NWUSS is more open to individual expression and fashion, most Japanese schools require that students, including visitors, remove jewelry, hats, baseball caps, and make-up when in the school. Dyed hair, tattoos and body piercings are not viewed favorably by Japanese schools. Students with tongue or facial piercings should be prepared to remove such jewelry while in Japan. Tattoos need to be covered at all times. Participants are expected to observe these rules to show respect for Japanese cultural norms.

• If a student does not exhibit suitable behavior, or does not follow the rules of the host family, NWUSS or RCI, the student may be sent home at her/his expense.

**Program Requirements:**

In order to participate, all students must meet the following minimum criteria:

* Be born in 2003 or 2004
* Hold or be able to get a valid Canadian Passport, or a passport from a country which does not require a visa to travel to Japan
* Be able to travel internationally
* Have consistently good marks with a demonstrated ability to be self- directed
* Be able to appropriately accommodate a home visit including;
  + Provide a clean, safe environment for the visiting student
  + Provide a warm, welcoming family environment
  + Provide three nutritious meals daily
  + Provide some local experiences to enhance the visiting student’s stay
  + Successfully complete a Criminal Reference Check for all adults residing in the host home

**Final Selection**

The final selection of participating students will be based on assessment of their ability to benefit the program and their ability to benefit from it. Key to this assessment will include the students:

* Demonstrated maturity, reliability and integrity
* Consistent and ongoing commitment to academic success
* Demonstrated interest in Japan and Japanese culture
* Ability to communicate effectively and willingness to learn some Japanese
* Resilience, positive attitude, flexibility
* Interpersonal skills
* Demonstrated ability to maintain an organized approach to school work
* Commitment to the program
* Compatibility with students identified by NWUSS

**Application Process:**

All students wishing to be considered must, before 3:30 pm on Tuesday, May 28th, 2019:

* complete the Online Application Package\*
* submit the completed, signed Parent Consent Form to Mr. Harvey in the Main Office

The Online Application link, and all relevant documents are available from the Riverdale CI website.

\*As part of the Online Application, students need to provide the **names of two RCI teachers who will act as references for them**. Once the application is submitted, the teachers will be sent a form to complete. **They do not need to provide a letter.** It is good practice to ask the teachers before you submit their names.

You can re-enter and edit your responses to your Online Application if you submit the original using the Google Account associated with your TDSB email address. It is highly recommended that you respond this way. Please try not to submit multiple applications.

**Interview Process**

Online Application Packages will be evaluated and students who are shortlisted will be asked to interview.

The interview will consist of a series of questions designed to facilitate evaluation of the student’s ability to communicate, maturity, resilience, aptitude and suitability for the program.

Final decisions regarding the student participants will be made following the interviews.