

What Is Your Responsibility?

Be mindful that you not only represent yourself while you are abroad, but also the United States of America or whatever country you are from. In addition, as a student representative of Mesa Community College, you serve as an ambassador of sorts, extending relations between our exchange school partners.

Your actions carry broader significance while you are abroad. With any social situation we encourage you to practice courtesy and be respectful of cultural differences while abroad. You will undoubtedly find yourself in situations that will challenge you to act appropriately. Keep in mind that "How you present yourself will make a difference!"

Respect the Chinese culture

- Desire to learn about the Chinese culture. You might want to ask questions and even try to learn some of the language while you are there. Showing interest in China and Chinese culture is a basis for respect.
- Chinese would like you to tell them about American culture. You may get asked the same questions over and over again by different Chinese. Don't get tired of giving the answers. Keep in mind this is potentially seen as a "once in a lifetime" opportunity by the Chinese students to interact with an American their own age.
- Always be polite when questioning something or making a suggestion or recommendation
- Chinese desire to make friends and to cherish the friendship. These friendships are meaningful despite the short duration they exist in person. Be prepared to make friends and then be prepared to continue this in the future even after the program is over.
- Exchange of the gifts is part of Chinese culture. You need to prepare a set of gifts to give to students you will interact with during your stay.

Respect the Chinese hosts

- Follow the established times for events – this is important for Chinese. When schedule to attend classes, students will come to walk you to the classroom so be in the lobby 10 minutes before the class begins to meet them.
- Be in a classroom at least 10 minutes early to show a positive attitude
- Be back to the dorm before the closing time. It is impolite and could affect the program if you ask the hosts to open the front door for you after the closing time. You are living on university campuses and the curfews are for students.
- Be on time for breakfast everyday, because this will be a time to talk about the schedule for that day. The schedule may change from day to day as our guests arrange things that may benefit your interests.
- Always follow the daily schedule. There is no excuse if someone misses the scheduled activity without prior explanation to and be approved by any of the program faculty members
- Always be on time when we leave campus with a group of students.
- When the meal has been ordered by the Chinese hosts or the program faculty members, normally you do not ask for something else unless you have made a request before the meal is ordered for special food. Someone is hosting the meal and it is rude to disrespect his or her wishes. If offered beer by a waitress, make sure this is an offer that comes from the host.

- Always show appreciation for an invitation from a Chinese host as you leave.
- Your host arranges seating and those in positions of respect will sit furthest from a door. Wait for the host to invite you to sit or after the host has invited respected guests to sit.

Respect the food culture

- It is okay to be surprised when you see something you have never seen in the restaurant and/or on the table. However, **never** say something disrespectful or show emotions toward what has been ordered.
- If you can, please try every dish on the table to show the appreciation of the invitation. If you cannot take one dish, please be polite to say, for example “I don’t think I am going to try this but I would like to have some more of another dishes.” It is impolite to say directly “no, I don’t want it.”
- Eating is a very important event for Chinese, particularly in GuangDong province. It is a social event as much as a meal.
- There are formal meals and informal ones. Pay more attention to the etiquette in formal meals. Informal ones with students can take on a very casual and natural feel. In these cases, don’t be afraid to ask for something you might like.
- Some food will look different (example, shrimp will have eyes and chicken will have a head). Some food may have a very different texture than you have anticipated. In these cases, it is not acceptable to make a big deal of this. Just accept it and if offended work around it.