

By Law, an F-1 student visa is required of all international students pursuing formal study in the United States. In order to obtain an F-1 visa, a student must be issued an I-20 form by an accredited school approved by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Saddlebrook Preparatory School is approved to issue the I-20 form to Saddlebrook Preparatory students pursuing formal study.

Prior to issuance of the I-20 form, U.S. immigration law requires that the school verify the student has sufficient funds to finance their studies. An official bank letter must be provided to the school clearly stating that you have the funds to pay for your entire enrollment at Saddlebrook Prep. In addition you must pay a \$4,500.00 deposit to the school to guarantee your place for the next school year. This deposit will be due in April. Also, tuition must be paid in advance of each semester to maintain your enrollment status at Saddlebrook Prep.

Translated transcripts must be provided to the school prior to your acceptance at the school. Also, a copy of your passport showing your name, citizenship, passport, and expiration date should be submitted prior to obtaining an I-20. Note: Permanent Residents must provide a copy of I-551 registration cards (front & back). However, permanent residents do not need an I-20 form or F-1 student visa status.

SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) is the computer system used by immigration to track International students. If you are transferring from or to another school in the United States you must transfer your SEVIS I-20 record from one school to the other. This includes transfer from Saddlebrook Prep to a College in the USA.

#### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:**

Obtain a passport from your government. (While in the U.S., your passport must always be valid for at least *six months* into the future.)

Obtain an I-20 form from Saddlebrook Preparatory. Carefully read the information on pages 1 and 2 of your I-20 form. The “**Instructions to Students**” section on page 2 is very important because it explains your responsibility while you are an F-1 student in the U.S. Sign your name at the bottom of page 1, and write your address in your country and your new address in the U.S. (5700 Saddlebrook Way, Wesley Chapel, FL 33543).

Document financial resources available to you in the U.S. (a bank statement or letter from your bank indicating money on deposit; proof of parent’s net worth; and letters of support from your family or sponsors). This financial documentation is evidence that you have enough funds to cover the cost of tuition and living expenses while in the U.S.

Take the following documents to the United State Consulate or Embassy closest to your home:

- A. Your passport.
- B. A passport-sized photograph.
- C. Your I-20 form from Saddlebrook Preparatory School.
- D. Evidence of financial support (see item 3 above).
- E. Evidence that you will return home after you study in the U.S. (this can be documentation of a job, family ties, property, and airline ticket showing a prepaid return flight, etc.)

If your papers are accepted by the U.S. Consular official, you will be issued an F-1 visa. The visa stamp will allow you to enter the U.S. to study at Saddlebrook Preparatory School.

*If you are applying for a visa less than 3 weeks before departing for the U.S., it may also be helpful to bring your airline ticket to the Consulate or Embassy to show your departure date to demonstrate the need to rush your application.*

#### **TRAVEL TO THE USA**

Keep your passport and I-20 form with you. **Do not pack them in your suitcase.**

You are not allowed to arrive in the USA more than 30 days in advance of the start of your program.

When you arrive in the U.S., your arrival documents will be examined and processed by BCBP (Bureau of Customs and Border Patrol) at the point of entry. The officer will return the I-20 and passport to you.

The officer will then give you and **I-94 card or “Arrival/Departure Record.”** It is a small white card. This card is very important. Keep it with your passport at all times. It tells you how long you may legally stay in the U.S. as an F-1 student. “D/S” may be written on your card, meaning “Duration of Status”, while you study as a full time student or while your I-20 is valid.

### **ARRIVAL AT THE SCHOOL**

You must be registered at the school within the first 30 days of your program each semester.

Each semester when you arrive at school you must check in with the DSO (Designated School Official) for International students. You must present your stamped I-20, passport with F-1 visa and your I-94 card for registration into SEVIS.

If you have received any verbal or written instructions at the Embassy or port of entry, report them immediately to the DSO upon your arrival at the school. 30 Day notices for lost I-20's must be processed immediately upon your arrival at the school.

You must report change of address (USA address and International home address) within 10 days. This information must be entered into SEVIS.

Do not leave the country without checking with the DSO. You must report your travel and make sure all your documents are in order for reentry to the country prior to leaving the school. Make sure your I-20 has been signed on the second page.

Keep your passport valid. Be aware of the expiration dates at all time for your F-1, I-20 and passport. Also make sure your I-94 is marked D/S. You will be considered out of status if any documents expire. See your DSO at least 30 days in advance of any expiration dates.

### **REGISTRATION FOR CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL YEAR**

In April (4<sup>th</sup> quarter) you must advise the school if you plan to withdraw or return for the next school year. A deposit for the next school year is due at the time along with an official bank letter stating that you have sufficient funds to pay for the school year. If you do not finalize your plans to return for the next school year your I-20 status will be withdrawn at the end of the school year.

Be aware; that to be eligible for summer break in the US you must have been enrolled for both the fall and spring semester and have plans to attend a school in the US in the fall.