

## Student (F) Visa Process

Once you've been accepted by Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm, you'll follow the following process.

### 1) **Apply for the I-20, the Certificate of Eligibility of Nonimmigrant Student Status form (should be done immediately):**

- fill out and return the I-20 Intake form (provided with your acceptance letter) to Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm;
- send a picture of the photo page from your child's passport.

Once processed, a rep from SWSF will mail you an original copy of the I-20. *The Form I-20 is an important document that you should keep safe, as you will need it throughout the international student life cycle.*

### 2) **Pay the I-901 fee**

After you receive your Form I-20, the next step is to pay your I-901 SEVIS Fee. Regulation requires that all international students pay this fee before the U.S. Department of State issues them a visa. Visit the [Paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee](#) page and watch the [I-901 SEVIS Fee payment tutorial](#) on <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students> to learn about each step of the payment process.

*Keep your I-901 SEVIS Fee payment receipt **and be sure to check that the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) identification (ID) number on the receipt matches the SEVIS ID number that appears on your Form I-20.*** Please contact SEVP if the SEVIS ID number on these two documents does not match, or if you encounter other issues in the process.

### 3) **Apply and Interview for a U.S. (F-1) Visa**

After being accepted to SWSF and getting a receipt for payment of the I-901 SEVIS Fee, you can apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate. Visit the [U.S. Department of State's website](#) for more information about applying for an F-1 visa. You can also find your nearest embassy or consulate by visiting the [U.S. Embassy website](#).

#### **Steps for Applying for your Student (F-1) Visa:**

##### **a) Complete the Online Student Visa Application**

- Go to <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> to complete the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160 – Learn more about completing the DS-160. **You must:** 1) complete the online visa application, and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
- Photo –You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements.

##### **b) Schedule an Interview**

You should schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early.

**New Student (F-1) visas** can be issued up to 120 days in advance of the start date for a course of study. However, you will not be allowed to enter the United States on your student visa more than 30 days before the start date.

### **c) Prepare for your Interview**

- You may be required to pay an application fee—refer to the US Embassy or Consulate where you are applying;
- Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:
  - ✦ **Passport valid for travel to the United States** – Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by country-specific agreements). Each individual who needs a visa must submit a separate application, including any family members listed in your passport.
  - ✦ **Nonimmigrant (F1) Visa Application**, Form DS-160 confirmation page.
  - ✦ **Application fee payment receipt**, if you are required to pay before your interview.
  - ✦ **Photo** – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the photo upload fails, you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements.
  - ✦ Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status-For Academic and Language Students, **Form I-20**. You and your school official must sign the Form I-20.
- Additional Documentation May Be Required:
  - ✦ A consular officer will interview you to determine your qualifications for a student visa, and may request additional documents, such as evidence of:
    - Your academic preparation, such as:
      - Transcripts, diplomas, degrees, or certificates from schools you attended; and
      - Standardized test scores required by your U.S. school;
    - Your intent to depart the United States upon completion of the course of study; and
    - How you will pay all educational, living and travel costs.
- Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will apply.

### **d) Attend Your (F1) Visa Interview**

A consular officer will interview you to determine whether you are qualified to receive a student visa. You must establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive a visa.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans are taken as part of the application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, the consular officer may determine that your application requires further administrative processing. The consular officer will inform you if this is required.

After the visa is approved, you may need to pay a visa issuance fee (if applicable to your nationality), and make arrangements for the return of the passport and visa to you. Review the visa processing times to learn more.

## **4) Confirm Receipt of Visa with Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm**

- Let Summerfield know your visa request was approved;

- Check to make sure that you received the right type of visa (F-1) and that your name and date of birth are correct and match the information in your passport. A student visa does not guarantee entrance into the country, but it does give you permission to arrive at a U.S. port of entry.

## **5) Enroll at Summerfield Waldorf School**

- **Long- and short-term International Students:** International Students enroll in Summerfield Waldorf School *ONLINE*. A link to online enrollment will be emailed to you by the Registrar, Andrea Trinei, 707-575-7194x124, registrar@summerfieldwaldorf.org. The Online Enrollment period begins in April.
- **High School International Students:** In addition, International Students may be required to complete and submit an Agent Appointment form and proof of homestay arrangement (if a high school student is living with a host family).
- **Exchange Students:** Exchange Students do not enroll online, but do fill out several forms (Emergency form, Field Trip release, etc.) that will be provided to the family at the time of their (F-1) Visa approval confirmation.
- **Other forms may be required:**
  - Proof of immunizations;
  - Proof of financial capacity to pay full tuition, such as a bank statement;
  - Proof of health insurance.

## **5) Arrive at U.S. Port of Entry**

You may enter the United States up to 30 days before your official program start date listed on your Form I-20. When you arrive to the United States, you will meet a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officer who has the authority to admit or deny your entrance into the country. You must present the CBP officer with your **original, signed Form I-20**, as well as your valid (F-1) visa and passport. It is also a good idea to have your acceptance letter from Summerfield, your evidence of financial support, and the name and telephone number of Oliva Wells. Be sure to keep these documents and information in your carry-on luggage, as you will not be able to access any of your checked baggage until after you pass through the U.S. port of entry.

A CBP officer may direct you to secondary inspection and interview you further to determine if you may enter the United States. If you do not have all your documents or if the officer cannot verify your information, they may deny you entry into the country or issue you a Form I-515A, "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor." If you receive a Form I-515A, you must work with your DSO to respond to it within 30 days.

## **6) Admission in the US: Receive a form I-94**

If CBP admits you into the country, they will give you an admission stamp in your passport and issue an electronic Form I-94, "Arrival and Departure Record." The Form I-94 includes information about when you were admitted, what status you must maintain (F-1) and how long you can stay in the United States. The CBP officer will inform you where to find your electronic Form I-94. You should verify that the "Admit Until" date on your Form I-94 and admissions stamp on your passport lists "D/S" (that means, Duration of Status) and not a specific date. For more information about the Form I-94 and the arrival process in the United States, visit the CBP website.