Many Thai families consist of parents and children, and often grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins will live in the same house. It is common in Thailand to have both parents work and be responsible for the family. It is very rare that mothers remain at home as a homemaker.

In Thailand, most fathers tend to make decisions on major issues and mothers are responsible for household chores and taking care of family members. Thai families make every effort to eat meals together and it is an important time of the day for sharing information. Additionally, family members in Thailand expect to have time to pursue their own interests, and having individual time for this is considered normal.

Teen Life: It is unusual for a Thai teen to be employed; most of the time spent outside of regular school hours is spent in supplementary classes after school or on weekends. Many parents give their children a daily allowance, and students can ask for extra money for their social activities or to buy personal items. Some Thai siblings share clothes and accessories if they are of the same gender and size, and usually they ask for permission first.

Responsibilities: In Thailand, children are given some household chores, and they tend to follow gender lines. Boys do not cook, do the laundry, or sew, as these are regarded as tasks for women. Most male teenagers in Thailand cannot cook beyond simple dishes or heating pre-packaged meals. Men are regarded as stronger and may be assigned more physically demanding jobs than women. Some families have household help to do chores.

Parental Involvement: Thai parents monitor their student's internet usage to a certain extent. Some parents may set time-limits for students to spend online, but many Thai students use the internet as a resource for studying.

Thai parents generally have a great influence on their children's activities or plans. Some parents may allow family members to pursue their own activities but will watch and advise often. Many Thai teens are attached to their parents, and will ask their parents for advice or approval.

Thai parents will contact their teen's school in cases where their student is showing low academic performance or misbehavior. Thai schools have open house sessions once a semester that allow parents to meet with the teachers.

Pets: Some Thai families have dogs, cats, or fish as a pet. Muslim families will not have dogs in the home. Students may be used to dogs living outside, but indoor dogs may be a new experience for Thai students.

A common solution to this is to allow students to keep their bedroom door closed so dogs will not be allowed into the room.

Personal Interactions

Classes: In Thailand, students may take over 10 subjects each semester. Students will have core classes, such as Math, English, and Thai nearly every day. Thus, students may need assistance from their host families at the beginning of the school year to help them choose classes and navigate studying new subjects. In Thai schools, there are typically about 50 students or more in each classroom. Thai students remain in one classroom throughout the school day while teachers rotate. Boys and girls sit apart in different rows.

Students in Thailand are evaluated almost the same way as students in the U.S., but they are not assigned homework every day. Assignments are varied according to the contents and learning objectives. Final exam grades are typically worth 40% of a student's grade, while the midterm exams, small tests, and assignments cover 60% of the final grade. While on program, Thai students may struggle with having daily homework assignments.

School Relationships: In Thailand, students must show respect for their teachers both verbally and non-verbally, addressing them by their last name with a title. Students will address their instructors as "Teacher," followed by the teacher's name.

Extracurricular Activities: Most Thai students join clubs or sport activities at school. On the weekends, they may have music or other kinds of sports activities in private clubs.

School Rules and Attire: In Thai schools there is a zero tolerance policy regarding cell phone use in school, and fighting is prohibited. There are severe penalties for breaking either rule. If a student cheats at school, there is also a penalty, and the school will call the student's parents.
Religion: Muslims in Thailand will take time for prayers five times a day, but they are often flexible with prayer times. Thai Muslims fast during daylight hours in Ramadan, eating meals only before sunrise and after sunset.

It is not tradition in Thailand to give gifts on the New Year or for birthdays, but many families have adopted this practice.

Holidays: In Thailand, Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are not nationally celebrated, but many people know about these celebrations from the media. Thai Muslims do celebrate the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays. Students on program may miss things like fasting during Ramadan (if they are Muslim), especially because Muslim families will usually prepare a large meal for dinner or breaking the fast to celebrate the day. During this meal, students and families will share a lot of food and will talk about their days.

Guest Culture: Thai people will always take care of their guests.

Lunch and Diets: Nearly all Thai families prepare meals from scratch. In big cities where life is rushed, people may serve packaged meals, but this is often only for breakfast. Students are accustomed to hot lunches. Most Thai schools have a canteen where students can buy their hot lunch, and most students will eat rice or noodles for lunch. Students from Thailand will likely not be familiar with eating sandwiches for lunch.

In areas where there is a large Muslim community, halal meat is available in fresh markets, and preserved halal food is available on the supermarket shelves. It is uncommon for Thai people to eat leftovers, but some may wrap up any uneaten food if there was a lot of food leftover. This wouldn’t be done for small amounts of food.

Personal Hygiene: Thai change clothes every day and it is considered unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row. Students from Thailand will shower twice a day, and sometimes more if it is a hot day. YES Thai students may be uncomfortable if they do not shower before going out and before going to bed. In Thailand, water is not wiped up in bathrooms, but is left to dry naturally because bathrooms are well ventilated. Towels are hung up outside the bathroom.

Some Thai teenagers will wash their own clothes, but during examination periods, parents might do it for them. Students will know how to use washing machine, but each machine could operate differently, so host families should teach students to use their specific washing machine. In Thailand, clothes dryers are rare, so students will not know how to use an electric clothes dryer.

Mixed Gender Socializing: Girls and boys can socialize in a group, but not individually in Thailand.

Friendships: Most Thai students socialize in groups and a few socialize one-on-one; students tend to socialize with the same sex. Most friends are from family and neighborhood connections, and some are from school. Friends are important for Thai teens, and they take the role seriously – friends often become like family for Thai teens. Most teens in Thailand socialize by going to malls or meeting with friends for extra studying.

Communication Styles: Communication is mostly indirect in Thailand. Thai people communicate indirectly to avoid irritating each other or being impolite. Expressing negative emotion is regarded as rude in Thailand, so students may try to hide their feelings or emotions. Some Thai students smile when they are uncomfortable, and this often happens when they are being disciplined.

Eye Contact: Eye contact in Thailand is regarded as rude and disrespectful when children talk to adults.

Cultural Norms: Thai teens are mostly dependent on their parents for their daily plans. In Thai culture, timeliness and punctuality is not taken as seriously as in the U.S. Also, in order to be polite and show respect to their elders, Thai people will call the elder “sister/brother”, “uncle/aunt”, or “grandma/grandpa,” and follow this by their first name, even they are not relatives or siblings.

Returning from Exchange: Upon return to their country, Thai students need to secure transcripts from their U.S. school to present in to their home school. If they do not have the U.S. transcript, they may have to repeat the school year in Thailand.