



# International Students: F-1 Student Visa Process and Requirements

## 1. APPLY TO A STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM (SEVP)-CERTIFIED SCHOOL.

Congratulations! We are so pleased you will be with us! Northwood is a SEVP-certified school.

## 2. PASSPORT.

A passport from your home country is required. Be sure that the first, middle (if any), last names and date of birth on the passport exactly matches the education documents you have submitted or will submit to Northwood School. *If the information does not match, contact the school at 518-302-5113 so a corrected I-20 can be issued.* Your passport must be valid at all times after arrival in the United States. It is the student's responsibility to apply for the passport, to remember when it will expire, and to renew it in your home country when needed. NOTE: A NEXUS card cannot be used to obtain a visa or to enter the U.S. while on an F-1 status.

## 3. RECEIVE A FORM I-20, "CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR NONIMMIGRANT STUDENT STATUS".

A student's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record is created, and the student is then issued a Form I-20 signed on page 1 by a designated school official (DSO). This form is valid for the entire time the student is at Northwood. **Print and read all pages of the I-20. Student and parent/guardian sign and complete bottom of page 1. International students are required to have all three pages of the I-20 and their passport/visa with them each and every time they enter the U.S.**

## 4. PAY THE I-901 SEVIS FEE – All international students must pay this fee.

**All students** must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee at FMJFee.com. Payment of this fee must occur before the prospective student applies for an F-1 visa (except Canadian and Bermudian students – see #5). Please print out the receipt of payment and keep it with your I-20.

## 5. APPLY FOR STUDENT VISA. CANADIAN AND BERMUDIAN STUDENTS – SKIP THIS STEP.

Complete the online DS-160, Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application form and print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview. You will upload your photo while completing the online DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html>. Schedule a visa interview appointment and be sure to attend your interview. Additional information can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>.

## 6. ARRIVE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Students may arrive no more than 30 days before their program start date (found on the I-20) and present their passport, Form I-20 and, except for Canadian and Bermudian students, a valid student visa to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the port of entry. If admitted, the student receives an electronic Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record" and should verify that the "Admit Until" date lists "D/S" for Duration of Status. Immediately upon arrival at Northwood, students should see the PDSO or DSO with their passport and I-20 for form processing and signature by a DSO on page 2. This signature is valid for one academic year.

## 7. MAINTAIN STATUS DURING PROGRAM OF STUDY.

Students must be full-time (5 or more courses), maintain normal academic progress toward a diploma by taking appropriate courses, attend and pass all classes and abide by all school rules to maintain their F-1 status.

## 8. TRANSFER, COLLEGE OR POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES.

Students who wish to transfer to another high school OR who are graduating from Northwood must see the PDSO to facilitate transfer of their SEVIS record to the high school, college or university they plan to attend.

## 9. WHEN DEPARTING THE UNITED STATES AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

In May of each year, students must see the PDSO or DSO to obtain an updated signature on their I-20 form.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>

PDSO (Principal Designated School Official) – Ms. Sandra Baker – [bakers@northwoodschoo.org](mailto:bakers@northwoodschoo.org)  
DSO (Designated School Official) – Mr. David McCauley – [mccauleyd@northwoodschoo.org](mailto:mccauleyd@northwoodschoo.org)  
DSO (Designated School Official) – Ms. Elenor Mandigo – [mandigoe@northwoodschoo.org](mailto:mandigoe@northwoodschoo.org)

### Documents required for travel:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 U.S. visa (not required for students from Canada and Bermuda)
- Proof of payment of the I-901 fee.
- Original I-20 form, all three pages, signed by the student and parent/guardian (see above).
- Financial documentation – how you and your family will pay for all educational, living and travels costs. Bank evidence of the ability to pay for attendance.
- Proof of admission to or enrollment in Northwood School (a copy of the enrollment contract or student's acceptance letter/email to Northwood.)