



# GROUP LEADER MANUAL

## North America

USA and Canada Centers

Welcome to PLUS and thank you for choosing to work with us.

Client satisfaction has been our company's primary aim for almost fifty years and is reflected through the many thousands of students from all over the world who year after year enroll at one of our centers.

The meticulous planning of every single aspect of the course, along with the commitment, motivation and professionalism of our staff are the simple ingredients of our success and your role as Group Leader plays an important part in this process. Please help us to make your experience with PLUS and that of your students one they will treasure for the rest of their lives. This manual is intended to assist you during your stay and to answer any of the possible questions you may have. It covers all aspects of your duties from the moment you arrive at the center until the students are safely back with their families. Please read it very carefully and if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the onsite staff, or our Head Office at USA@plus-ed.com

We wish you a very pleasant and enjoyable stay,  
*The PLUS Team*

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## 1. Arrival in North America

### Immigration and passport control

- Go to the officer and tell them you have a group, and you will stay at the window while they each go through one by one.
- Tell students to go through the check first while you stand by the window.
- Tell them to politely answer any questions they might be asked.
- While English Language Learning is an important mission of our program, please remember that the reason for a student's visit is not to study. The reason for the visit is a sightseeing program as a tourist. B-Visas (tourist visas) are eligible for limited hours of classes that PLUS abides by to keep in compliance with B-Visa requirements. If there is any problem with an immigration officer, please read and/or show them Appendix A.

### Arrivals Hall

- Follow signs to the Arrivals Hall.
- Do a headcount when you get there.
- Help students get their bags
- If one or more bags are missing, go to Baggage Reclaim to register lost baggage. You will get a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) with a personal reference number. You need this number to check the status of your delayed baggage.
- Once your baggage has been found, the airline will contact you to arrange delivery.

### Meet your PLUS Representative – Transfers Booked with PLUS

- Once your group has collected all their luggage, go to the exit.
- If PLUS has arranged your transfer from the airport to the center, your group will be met by an airport assistant holding a PLUS sign.
- Have a look at [www.plus-usa.com](http://www.plus-usa.com) if you are having trouble locating the PLUS rep.
- Your PLUS Rep will take you to your coach bay to meet the coach.
- You will be given a rooming list for the campus to fill out. PLEASE CORRECT ANY ISSUES BEFORE GETTING ON THE COACH so that the campus team can resolve them before you arrive to campus. Once you arrive on campus, changes may not be able to be accommodated.
- You may have to wait for the coach to be released from the coach airport parking area to the pick-up bay. This is not because the coach is late, but because North American airports requires coaches to wait in their coach parking area and only release them once the Representative lets the Coach Parking Marshall know that the group is ready and waiting at the appropriate bay.

- If you don't see the airport assistant, do not panic! Airports can be very busy in the summer and sometimes it can take a while for the assistant to locate you and your group.
- If you have any issues, please call +1-646-661-6786.

### **Arrival at the center**

When you and your group arrive at the center you will be met by a Campus Manager or another member of PLUS staff. They will welcome you to the center.

- PLUS staff will meet you when you arrive.
- You will be given: an Activity Program, a damage inspection report if applicable etc, lanyards (please tell your students to wear them at all times and to attach their keys to them / or put their key cards inside them) and some policies to sign.
- A staff member will take you all to your rooms and tell you where and what time to meet them (usually 30 minutes to 1 hour later) for the Orientation Tour. If your group has arrived late, the tour will be given the following day.
- If you have had a tour you will be expected to find the dining hall by yourselves. If you haven't had a tour an, an Activity Coordinator will meet you and take you to dinner or provide a packed dinner if your scheduled arrival to campus is past the deadline to eat in the dining hall.
- Pending your arrival time, after dinner will be the Welcome Presentation and some get-to-know-you games. All students and GLs must attend.

## **2. Key People on Campus**

All our staff are highly trained, full of enthusiasm, and ready to help you. They include:

### **The Campus Operations Manager & The Campus Administrator**

These roles have overall responsibility for all on-campus housing and meals, as well as for the wellbeing of all students and their leaders while on campus. They will set up the center following the company's guidelines and ensure that all services offered are professionally and punctually carried out to meet with our clients' expectations.

### **Activity Manager (AM)**

The Activity Manager has the responsibility of overseeing the Activity Coordinators on a day-to-day basis. They will plan and organize all excursions and on-campus activities and set up and close down the center as per Head Office guidelines as well as ensure that all services offered are professionally and punctually carried out to meet clients' expectations.

### **Activity Coordinators (AC) and Counselors**

The PLUS Leisure Staff Team is made up of Activity Coordinators and Counselors. Even though they have specific duties, they are all responsible for organizing, promoting, and running the Leisure Program as well as encouraging and motivating students to participate in all activities and events.

### **Academic Supervisor (AS)**

They have overall responsibility for the Academic Program - teachers, teaching, placement testing, and students' academic progress. The main areas of responsibility are the management of the teaching staff (punctuality, attitude, delivery of high-quality lessons); timetabling; level allocation; teacher-class allocation; and lesson observations. If you or any of the Group Leaders have a problem with any of the teaching staff, please speak to the Academic Supervisor so that they can deal with the teacher directly.

### **Instructors**

Instructors are non-residential and live locally to the center. All teachers are all fully qualified and experienced.

## **3. Safeguarding**

Group Leaders MUST read and sign the Plus Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy which is updated annually. Please bear in mind the following additionally when on campus:

- Avoid being alone with a child. If this is unavoidable, for example if a child wants to talk to you privately, they need to find a public place where they can talk without being heard but can still be seen by other people. Alternatively, they can talk in a place where a colleague is discreetly present.
- Use appropriate language with children.
- Treat all pupils and staff with respect.
- Encourage positive, respectful, and safe behavior among pupils.
- Understand the content of the 'PLUS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' and all other policies and codes of conduct that may be issued by PLUS.
- Never flirt with a student or make sexually suggestive or provocative comments, even in jest/ as a joke.
- Try to recognize if a student is developing a 'crush' on you and do nothing that might be construed as encouraging this. If appropriate, inform the Campus Administrator if this is suspected.
- Maintain professional standards of pastoral care and avoiding the use of sexualized, derogatory, or over familiar language in the company of pupils.
- Never smoke in front of the students and abide by the host institution's smoking policy.

#### 4. General Code of Conduct for a Group Leader

Group leaders must always strive to set a great example for their students. Remember that PLUS staff's priorities are to make sure the students are safe, happy, and enjoy their stay with PLUS. We recognize that you will want the best for your students, but it is also imperative to work alongside our staff in a harmonious and respectful manner.

Bearing this in mind, it is essential that when on campus, Group Leaders adhere to the following:

- Supervise the children at all times (apart from when they are in class/ they are given free time on excursions).
- When supervising, please ensure minimum time on your phone, you must be safeguarding your students and students will also lose their enthusiasm in activities if they see you on your phone.
- Encourage your students to speak English.
- Respect the other members of staff you will be working alongside; you are working in a team.
- Report any problems you may have to the staff (they will always be contactable on a WhatsApp group).
- Make sure that the Managers can reach you while you're on and off campus in case of emergency and to communicate any changes of plans (there is wi-fi on all campuses).
- Attend any necessary meetings with the Managers.
- Ensure you report any accidents or safeguarding issues to your managers immediately.
- Ensure you report any illnesses to the managers (see Covid 19 section)
- Bring the children on time to coaches. Coaches will not wait if all of the other students are there.
- Bring the children on time to all activities.
- Ensure children are always aware of all the necessary meeting points.
- Ensure your children all have the PLUS website if they have a mobile phone ([www.plus-usa.com](http://www.plus-usa.com))
- Ensure your children follow all necessary rules, all rules will have been put in place due to safeguarding issues (such as no girls and boys sharing rooms) or by the university (such as lights out at a certain time).
- Help to supervise during night duty. You must ensure all your students are in their assigned rooms. The PLUS staff will patrol for a while after lights out, but you must help assist in night time duty beforehand.

## 5. Accommodation

### In residence

PLUS will endeavor to satisfy all accommodation requests, however, at times is not always possible. We have Safeguarding rules to follow, and we must fit all groups within the layout of the Campus. PLUS staff are here to help, please do not get angry with them if all your requests have not been met. Once the bedrooms have been assigned, please:

- Double check the rooms correspond to the correct names.
- Ask your students to immediately report any damage or problems i.e. broken wash basin/toilet, lamp bulb etc. so that our staff may intervene promptly. You'll be given a form to annotate.
- Ensure every student knows exactly where your room is. In case they need assistance, you are their first port of call.
- Know you will have been assigned a place as close as possible to your students.

PLUS endeavors to give all Group Leaders single rooms and is usually successful. However, due to campus numbers, this may not always be possible. Group Leaders will share a bathroom another Group Leader(s). Rooms in hotels are double occupancy. Singles cannot be guaranteed.

## 6. The Study Course

### Course Structure and Objectives

Courses are planned for 30-45 hours, depending on the package purchased. For more in-depth details please see our website. Before arrival, students are put into the correct levels through our Placement Test. They are monitored on the first day of class and throughout the course. If you feel that one of your students has not been allocated to the appropriate level, please speak immediately to the Academic Supervisor, not the Campus Administrator or Activity Manager. Final note: If your group has arrived after the course commencement, it may be necessary to organize some make up lessons so that all your students attend the full course hours. The Academic Supervisor will agree an alternative course plan in accordance with the PLUS Head Office.

### E.F.L. Teachers

All our teachers are professional, highly qualified, and well-prepared and have been selected for their experience, friendliness, and enthusiasm. **Should you wish to observe a lesson, please speak to the Academic Supervisor at least 24 hours in advance**, and he/she will schedule it appropriately. If, for some unforeseen circumstance more teachers are absent, the Academic Supervisor will "redefine" classes so that students do not miss out on their lessons. In this unfortunate circumstance, classes may need to consist of more than 15 students.

### **Class Attendance and Certificates**

The students are compelled to attend morning/afternoon classes and strictly adhere to the teaching timetable. Each teacher is required to register the students' attendance daily and to report any absence to the Academic Supervisor. Repeated/unjustified absences of students as well as the non-commencement of the course or abandoning it before its termination will lead to consequences including being held back from excursions and possible expulsion from the program. A certificate of attendance is issued to each student at the end of the course during the final day ceremony.

## **7. The Leisure Program**

PLUS is particularly keen to provide a well-balanced cultural and recreational activity program, for all ages and tastes. Activities usually include full day trips, walking tours and visits to town, talent contest, karaoke, disco, social games, and sport activities. In case of bad weather, the activity program may change. All activities must finish before the curfew established by the university. Remember that you must be present at the beginning of lessons and activities to check attendance and punctuality and that you are responsible for the supervision of your students at all times. This includes lesson breaks. You must make sure students are in their rooms with lights off by the curfew established by the university.

### **Excursions**

Trips are a very enjoyable part of the program for students and Group Leaders. In all the centers there are several "Full Day" or "Half Day" trip by private coach or school bus, or public transportation to the most popular destinations in the area. The students will be accompanied by PLUS staff who, once at the destination, will lead a walking tour providing the students with information about the main sights. Remember they are not professional tour guides!

Please ensure your students observe a few basic rules will make each trip pleasurable for everyone.

- Be on time- coaches cannot wait for individual students.
- If travelling by private coach, seatbelts must be worn and if required by your PLUS Campus Rules, masks.
- No eating or drinking is allowed on the coach.
- Ensure students wear their lanyard with the ID card.
- Free time- Students may be given some free time. It is important that they travel around in a minimum group size of 4. Students under 14 must stay with their group leader at all times.
- Ensure students have understood the meeting points and times.
- Ensure students do not leave the group without permission from you.



On excursion days you will be given a boxed meal or an allocation of money to use on a prepaid card. If a boxed meal, before departing please make sure that your group has collected their boxed meal. It is your responsibility to ensure your students have done this. Important to note, if any of your students have food allergies and/or dietary restrictions, it is your responsibility to communicate that information to the Campus management team beforehand, so they can place an order for a meal that your student can eat. Please ensure the student selects the correct meal when collecting their boxed meal.

## **8. Student's Welfare**

The Group Leader plays a major role in providing the pastoral care appropriate to the age of our students on campus. Your responsibilities include the overall welfare, security and safety of your students (24-hour availability), helping out with accidents, illness, homesickness, students' personal problems, etc. as well as religious observance.

### **Risk Assessment**

We have prepared a Generic Risk Assessment, a Specific Risk Assessment for trips and town visits and a Fire Risk Assessment, which Group Leaders must familiarize themselves with. For more details see our website.

### **Emergency Action Plan**

The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is for Grade A emergencies that involve serious incidents, injury or worse. For more details see our website.

### **Fire Safety and Fire Drills**

PLUS will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, to minimize the risks to staff and students, which may arise from fire while participating in the PLUS program. Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis. Group Leaders and students are obliged assist in this.

### **Accidents & Emergencies**

Group Leaders should take the most appropriate action with no delay i.e. call an ambulance (911, the number is free), go to the local GP or hospital etc. and always stay with the student. A detailed description of the accident (time, place of accident, witness etc) must be given to the PLUS staff. Once 911 is called and help is on the way, have another person inform a staff member immediately.

### **Student Care on Campus**

Students cannot be left unsupervised at any time. Students are not permitted to stay back from an excursion for simply not wishing to participate. If a student misses a bus, the student shall spend the day in the PLUS office studying.

### **Friends and Family Student Care (Student Release Form)**

If a student has friends or family in the city, they are allowed to be taken from the campus to visit with them provided that a Student Release Form is signed by the adult checking out the student, AND with parent's written authorization which must be obtained and kept on file at the PLUS office. Written authorization must come from the booking agency directly to the North American Head Office. Notice of at least one full business day is required to grant these requests.

### **Medical Services**

Ask the Campus Administrator for the name, address and phone number of the nearest medical service. This will also be displayed on the website Plus-USA.com.

### **Dentists' Services**

Ask the Campus Administrator for the name, address and phone number of a dentist. This will also be displayed on the website Plus-USA.com.

### **Lost Passport**

Please follow the Lost Passport Procedure on our website.

## **9. Student Behavior & Discipline**

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of our students, there are a number of rules both for staying in one of our centers and also American and Canadian laws. Please see our student handbook.

## **10. Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure**

Please see our Anti Bullying Policy. If you suspect bullying, please report it immediately to our Campus Administrator.

## **11. Quality Control & Complaints Procedure**

To ascertain that the services offered meet clients' expectations, you and your students are required to complete an online questionnaire in the middle and at the end of the course.

Negative comments will attract proper consideration and remedial action will be immediately taken and registered. Should the problem persist, please follow PLUS Complaints Procedure on the website.

## **12. On Departure**

Organizing your departure will be aided as much as possible by the PLUS team. It is paramount that you organize your students the night before your departure and bear in mind the following:

- Check your flight and transfer details with the Campus Management Team and your airline, at least 3 days prior to your departure in case there have been any last-minute changes.
- Meet with your students at least 30 minutes before the actual coach departure time.
- Check for any damage in your student bedrooms when collecting the bedroom keys; and inform the Campus Administrator accordingly.
- Return the keys to PLUS staff.
- Collect all your students' passports and air tickets.
- Make sure all your students board the coach before leaving the campus (head count).
- If a student is missing and if he/she cannot be found and the coach has to leave to catch the plane, then one leader should remain behind to travel with the missing student.

## **13. Health and Treatment Procedures**

There are certain measures that may be in place to prevent the spread of viruses and other infections and keep our students and staff safe. These measures may include face masks and/or isolation if deemed necessary by the state or federal government. Group Leaders are required to assist PLUS staff on any health processes that are implemented while in North America. If a participant requires medical attention, virtually all travelers' insurance requires payment out of pocket and then reimbursement from your insurance company when receipts are submitted. If visiting a hospital emergency room, payment is almost never required at the time of service.



## Appendix A

### Tourist Visas and the PLUS USA Program

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to provide information and further context regarding the students who will be participating in the language education program organized by our company, PLUS, in partnership with various agencies around the world.

The PLUS program is an enriching experience that brings international students to the United States for cultural immersion. Our program focuses on leisure activities, trips to tourist attractions and culturally significant places in the USA, and providing English language classes (approx. 15 hours per week) to enhance students' language skills and foster a deeper understanding of American culture.

The students and their accompanying chaperones will be traveling to the United States on tourist visas (B) rather than a J or F visa. This is due to permitted B Visa activities which include "Enrollment in a short recreational course of study, not for credit toward a degree." (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html>). Though students do reside on a college campus while in the USA, the campus facilities are merely rented by PLUS and the English class portion of the recreational visit does not award any high school or college credits.

If there are any additional documents or information you require to clarify the students' visa status, please do not hesitate to let us know. We are more than willing to provide any necessary supporting materials or engage in further discussions to ensure compliance with CBP and USCIS regulations for non-immigrant visas.

We appreciate your support in facilitating a smooth and successful experience for our students. If you would like to contact me or anyone at PLUS, please feel free to use any of the below methods.

Sincerely,

Michael Hollinshead  
Director of Operations

PLUS U.S. Corporation  
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