



*International  
Program  
2025-2026*

**Address any questions to:**

International Admissions  
Great Plains Lutheran High School  
1200 Luther Ln NE  
Watertown, SD 57201 USA

Telephone: (605) 886-0672  
Fax: (605) 882-9089  
Email: [gplhs@gplhs.org](mailto:gplhs@gplhs.org)  
Website: [www.gplhs.org](http://www.gplhs.org)



## *International Program*

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## *International*

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### *Program Overview*

**Type of School:** A private university preparatory high school, grades 9-12.

**Accreditation:** Great Plains Lutheran High School is accredited by the South Dakota Department of Education, WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) and the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA).

**Location:** Great Plains Lutheran High School is located in eastern South Dakota. The city of Watertown has a population of 24,000. Watertown is 100 miles north of Sioux Falls, South Dakota (population 210,000), 150 miles south of Fargo, North Dakota (population 170,000), and 200 miles west of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota (population 2.7 million).

**School Enrollment:** 140-150 students are enrolled at GPLHS each year. At a school of this size students are able to participate in a variety of activities while still receiving the individual attention that enables them to succeed.

**Housing for Students:** International and American students who are not from the Watertown area live on campus in the GPLHS dormitory. Each two-person room includes a bed, desk area, wardrobe, and in-room restroom facilities. All meals are served in the dormitory, with the exception of school day lunch which is served at school. The dormitory is closed for breaks and holidays and international students are encouraged to spend time with American student host families.

**Cultural Experiences:** In addition to spending time with American student host families, international students are provided with unique cultural experiences which may include horseback riding, witnessing a buffalo round-up, and fishing or enjoying other recreation on the lakes of South Dakota. Recreational outings are scheduled periodically throughout the year.

**Advisory Services:** Students are supported with guidance regarding day-to-day needs, assistance with medical needs, transportation to appointments, and more.

**College Prep Coursework:** Courses in math, science, English, history, social studies, music, art, and world languages are taught in preparation for college entrance.

**Academic Help Available:** Tutoring is available as well as scheduled study halls with supervision.

**Academic/College Guidance:** Special assistance is given for course planning, as well as college/university planning, preparation and application. Assistance is available in making visits to university campuses.

**School Year Calendar:** Classes begin in mid-August and end in late-May each year.

**Activities and Athletics:** Students are encouraged to participate in activities outside the classroom. Interscholastic athletics include cross country, football, volleyball, cheer, basketball, track, and golf. Many students participate in drama, art, choir, band, student council, and a variety of volunteer service opportunities.

**After Graduation:** International graduates of Great Plains Lutheran High School have attended universities such as the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of New York-Buffalo, Penn State University, George Washington University, Grinnell College, Martin Luther College, and Wisconsin Lutheran College.

**For More Information Contact:**

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## *International*

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### *Admission Requirements*

It is recommended that Application for Enrollment be made early for the best opportunity for enrollment. The standard application deadline is April 1, with decisions made by April 15. Applications submitted after April 1 will be reviewed on a space-available basis.

Applicants are rated on the following criteria:

- Demonstration of English ability that will lead to success in our setting
- Transcripts in English which show above-average academic ability
- Students who are responsible, honest, cooperative, demonstrate good character, and are respectful of others
- Students who are self-motivated, responsible for their own success, and able to organize their time
- Applications must be complete and include the main application form, official English transcripts from the last three years, letters of recommendation, Student's Life form, and a non-refundable \$150 fee (see the Enrollment Procedure and Timetable for more details)

Before being accepted into the program, applicants must demonstrate English proficiency in the following ways:

- Submitting English proficiency test results (TOEFL, TOEFL Jr, iTEP or Duolingo) showing intermediate or higher level proficiency, and/or showing a strong academic history of English coursework
- Participating in a personal interview (video)
- Submitting a writing sample (hand written)

Applicants have a stronger application if they are entering Great Plains Lutheran High School at an earlier grade level and are committed to earning a diploma from GPLHS.

The Great Plains Lutheran High School admissions committee seeks a balance in representation with students from a variety of countries to create an academic environment that facilitates developing conversational English. Great Plains Lutheran High School does not discriminate according to national origin, gender, or heritage, but reserves the right to accept and decline applicants in a manner that leads to the best learning environment for all students.

The application process starts by contacting:

Director: David Maertz  
Telephone: (605) 886-0672  
Email: [dmaertz@gplhs.org](mailto:dmaertz@gplhs.org)

International Admissions  
Great Plains Lutheran High School  
1200 Luther Ln NE  
Watertown, SD 57201 USA



## *International*

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### *Fees and Provisions*

The following fees and expenses are intended to help parents understand the cost for an international student attending Great Plains Lutheran High School and what these fees provide.

#### **Fees**

Agency Fees Vary

Application Fee	\$150	(non-refundable)
Enrollment Fee	\$2000	(non-refundable; holds place in enrollment)
Tuition Fee	\$15,000	
Residence Fee	\$5,550	(includes meals, damage deposit, and airport transportation)

#### **Payment Procedures**

The \$150 non-refundable Application Fee must be included with the Application for Admission form. Upon receiving the acceptance letter by email, the family must pay the \$2000 Enrollment Fee to hold the student's place in the enrollment. The remaining fees (Tuition and Residence) of \$20,550 must be paid in full by August 1. Payment is to be made in U.S. currency in the form of a bank draft or a wire transfer. Wire transfer information is included on the Payment Procedure document. The Residence Fee includes a refundable \$100 damage deposit.

In the event the student visa is denied, any tuition or residence fees already paid will be refunded. The Application Fee and Enrollment Fee are non-refundable. Exception: the Enrollment Fee will be refunded with proper evidence showing proof of visa denial.

Students who enroll in Great Plains Lutheran High School are committed to attending school here for a minimum of one academic year. Students who withdraw or transfer before this time will not be granted any refund of fees. If a student is asked by the Administration to withdraw from GPLHS, all tuition fees for the current semester are non-refundable, and all residence fees for the entire year are non-refundable.

#### **Health Insurance**

Health insurance is required, but not included in these fees. If students do not provide proof of accepted insurance within one week prior to arrival, Great Plains Lutheran High School may purchase insurance and bill the student appropriately.

#### **Other Expenses**

Incidental costs for students average between US\$600-1,000 and may include special activities, school supplies, personal items, and entertainment funds.

## **Residence Amenities**

International students living in the Great Plains Lutheran High School dormitory will have many opportunities to interact with other students. All students are provided:

- Furnished Room: Bed, Mattress, Desk, Chair, Wardrobe, Sink, Toilet, Shower
- Laundry Facilities: Use of Washing Machines and Dryers at no charge
- Meal Plan: Monday through Friday 3 meals per day; Weekends late morning brunch and supper
- Recreation Areas: Ping Pong, Billiards, Foosball, Television, Gymnasium
- Internet access during designated hours

The following services are also provided:

- Evening study period every weeknight with homework assistance upon request
- Outings planned by supervisors for cultural and recreational activities
- Transportation provided for shopping and other activities

## **School Vacations - Residence Closing**

The Great Plains Lutheran High School dormitory is closed for all breaks and holidays and international students are encouraged to spend time with American student host families. This provides international students with another opportunity to experience American culture and family life.

The Great Plains Lutheran High School staff provides assistance in arranging these home-stays for breaks and holidays.

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	1200 Luther Ln NE	Email: <a href="mailto:gplhs@gplhs.org">gplhs@gplhs.org</a>
	Watertown, SD 57201 USA	Website: <a href="http://www.gplhs.org">www.gplhs.org</a>



It is recommended that Application for Enrollment be made early for the best opportunity for enrollment. The standard application deadline is April 1, with decisions made by April 15. Applications submitted after April 1 will be reviewed on a space-available basis.

**Step 1: Application and Supporting Documents**

*Please complete and submit the following forms and fee by April 1.*

*Applications received after April 1 will be considered on a space-available basis.*

1. Application for Admission – to be completed by the student and family
2. Principal-Counselor Recommendation – to be completed by the student’s current Head of School, Principal, or Counselor
3. English Teacher Recommendation – to be completed by the student’s current English teacher
4. Student’s Life Form – to be completed by the student
5. Transcript of Courses, Credits, and Grades from the past three years (in English)
6. Financial Statement to provide Proof of Ability to Pay (translated to English and notarized)
7. US \$150 Non-Refundable Application Fee
8. Duolingo Scores
9. Interview

**Step 2: Acceptance and Enrollment**

*When a student is accepted at GPLHS, an acceptance letter will be emailed.*

*Upon receiving the email, please submit the following fee and forms.*

1. US \$2000 Enrollment Fee
2. Copy of Passport
3. Consent and Permission Form
4. Current Immunization/Vaccination Record (in English)
5. Proof of medical insurance (Medical insurance is required for attendance at GPLHS; if a student does not have appropriate medical insurance, GPLHS can assist in securing coverage)

*After the Enrollment Fee has been received, the following will be sent to you.*

1. Acceptance Letter
2. I-20 Form from Great Plains Lutheran High School
3. A Receipt for the Application Fee and Enrollment Fee
4. School Calendar
5. Information for scheduling classes

### **Step 3: Visa and Payment**

1. Once you have received the I-20, go online and pay the SEVIS I-901 fee ([www.ice.gov/sevis](http://www.ice.gov/sevis) For Students)
2. Make an appointment at the closest US Embassy or Consulate to apply for your F-1 Visa
3. Check the website of the Embassy or Consulate for a complete list of required documents
4. Take all required documents with you – this may include
  - The passport
  - The acceptance letter
  - The I-20 form from Great Plains Lutheran High School
  - The receipts for any payments made
  - Proof of payment of US \$350 SEVIS I-901 fee
  - Proof of the family financial support
  - Proof of connections to home country after schooling is finished
  - A 2" x 2" photograph
  - Application forms
5. Inform Great Plains Lutheran High School as soon as a Visa is granted
6. Send payment of US\$20,550 to finalize your enrollment (by July 15)

### **Step 4: Travel Plans**

1. Plan to arrive at Great Plains Lutheran High School one week prior to opening weekend (Monday, August 18, 2025).
2. Make arrangements to arrive at the Watertown, South Dakota airport (ATY) or Sioux Falls, South Dakota airport (FSD).
3. Inform Great Plains Lutheran High School of finalized flight and arrival day/time as soon as travel arrangements are made.
4. GPLHS will organize transportation from the Watertown or Sioux Falls airport to GPLHS.
5. Orientation for new international students will begin on Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

**Send completed forms and fees to:** International Admissions  
Great Plains Lutheran High School  
1200 Luther Ln NE  
Watertown, SD 57201 USA

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*What to Bring*

**Items to bring with you from home**

School clothing (see next page)

Dress clothing

Pajamas

School and dress shoes

Alarm clock (You are responsible for getting up on time!)

Personal items—toiletries, jewelry, pictures, stuffed animals, etc.

Computer

Note: water boilers and hot plates are not allowed in dormitory rooms

**Items that can be easily purchased once you arrive**

School supplies (pencils, pens, notebooks, folders, binders, etc.)

Clothes hangers

Over-the-counter medications

Personal supplies—toiletries, health care items, snacks, etc.

**Items you may choose to have, but are not necessities**

Printer

Cell phone—you must pay for the monthly phone charges from the mobile phone company

**Items that are provided for you**

Furnished Dorm Room—bed, mattress, wardrobe area, desk, chair, trash can, mirror, sink, toilet, shower

Wireless internet connection

Telephone for local phone calls

Use of washing machine and dryer

Regular opportunities to shop for necessities will be provided by the dormitory staff. International student group outings will also be scheduled.

**Appropriate Dress for School**

The following guidelines apply to students during the school day or at any school-sponsored events on or off campus. More details can be found in the Parent/Student Handbook that all students will receive during orientation week.

## Basic Guidelines for All

Students are to keep themselves neat, clean, well-groomed and modestly dressed.

## School Dress and Appearance Guidelines

The GPLHS dress code has been established with the following concepts in mind.

1. Modesty – We present ourselves in a modest manner that does not bring unwarranted attention to ourselves.
2. Appropriateness – Appropriate grooming and appearance will prepare students to meet a world that will make decisions about employment and advancement.
3. Orderliness – A standard or guideline is necessary for orderliness and safety within the learning environment.

The following does not present an exhaustive list of what is appropriate. As times and fashions change, this list will certainly undergo revision and the administration reserves the right to amend the list as needed. If there ever is a question whether an item is appropriate, it is the student's obligation to ask before it is worn to school. Since many of these guidelines cannot be defined precisely, the appropriateness will be determined by the administration.

1. Hair is to be of a natural color, neat, and clean. Hair is to be of modest length and style.
2. Attire is to be appealing, not revealing: no bare midriffs, no low-cut tops, and no excessively tight clothing. Leggings should not be worn without additional covering. The length of skirts and shorts should fall and remain below the fingertips.
3. Attire is to be clean, un-tattered, not excessively worn, without open holes, not overly baggy or saggy.
4. Students must wear shoes, not slippers. Closed-toe shoes must be worn in the science lab and kitchen.
5. Items that promote unwholesome or unhealthy lifestyles should not be worn.
6. Appropriate shorts may be worn throughout the school year.
7. Facial hair may be clean-shaven or of modest length and style; neat, clean, and well-groomed.
8. Coaches and directors reserve the right to incorporate a more stringent/conservative dress code for practices, performances, and events.

### For more information contact:

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Father's Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
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Father's Address (if different)	Email Address
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Employer	Occupation	Work Phone
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To whom should school correspondence (grade reports, communications, etc.) be sent?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents – address listed above
- \_\_\_\_\_ Agency contact person – list information below
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other – list information below

**Agency/Other Contact Information**

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Name of Agency or Other Contact	Contact Person at Agency
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Agency/Contact Address	Agency/Contact Email Address
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Agency/Contact Telephone	Agency/Contact Fax
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**Signatures**     *Please read and sign*

Please register my student for enrollment at Great Plains Lutheran High School. We, the parent/guardian and the student, hereby agree to abide by all guidelines and policies set forth in the Great Plains Lutheran High School Handbook, by the GPLHS board of directors, and by the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association. We verify that the information listed on this application is complete and accurate. We understand that it is our obligation to update any information that may change after submitting this application. We give Great Plains Lutheran High School the authority to request any transcripts and records from our current or previous school.

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Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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Student Signature	Date
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**Send your completed application to:**    International Admissions  
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1200 Luther Ln NE    Fax: (605) 882-9089  
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International

School Principal or Counselor Recommendation

CONFIDENTIAL

\_\_\_\_\_ is a candidate for admission to Great Plains Lutheran High School in the United States. The admissions committee would like your evaluation of this student and any observations you think might be helpful. Please answer in English. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

- 1. How long have you known this student?
2. What level or range academically does the student fall compared to the other students at your school? Bottom 10% 10-25% 25-50% 50-75% 75-90% Top 10%
3. What do you perceive as the student's strengths?
4. To your knowledge, has the applicant ever been suspended, dismissed, or involved in any serious disciplinary action?
5. Are you aware of any areas in which this student may need assistance, academic or social?
6. Additional comments that will assist in our admissions decision:
7. Please check one of the following:
I recommend the applicant.
I recommend the applicant with reservation for the following reasons:
I do not recommend the applicant for the following reasons:

Signature of school principal/counselor \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_
Address \_\_\_\_\_
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed form to: International Admissions
Great Plains Lutheran High School
1200 Luther Ln NE
Watertown, South Dakota 57201 USA



*International*

*English Teacher Recommendation*

**CONFIDENTIAL**

\_\_\_\_\_ is a candidate for admission to Great Plains Lutheran High School in the United States. The admissions committee would like your evaluation of this student and any observations you think might be helpful. Please answer in English. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Number of years the student has studied English: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the applicant in the following areas. Circle the appropriate number below:

Work ethics/motivation	1 2 3 4 5	Relationships with peers	1 2 3 4 5
Honesty and integrity	1 2 3 4 5	Cooperation with adults	1 2 3 4 5
Maturity	1 2 3 4 5	Reactions to suggestions/advice	1 2 3 4 5
Responsibility	1 2 3 4 5	Reactions to criticism	1 2 3 4 5
Concern for others	1 2 3 4 5	Ability to meet commitments	1 2 3 4 5
Leadership ability	1 2 3 4 5	General school citizenship	1 2 3 4 5

1=Unacceptable 2=Below Average 3=Average 4=Good 5=Superior

Please rate the student's English language ability. Circle the appropriate word below:

<b>Reading</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Writing</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Speaking</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Grammar</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Comprehension</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

Please supply brief comments about the applicant's character in the following areas:

Maturity \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibility \_\_\_\_\_

Creativity \_\_\_\_\_

Self Motivation \_\_\_\_\_

Sociability \_\_\_\_\_

Ability to adapt \_\_\_\_\_

Please comment about the Applicant's attendance record, study habits and attitude in class.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name and signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send completed form to:** International Admissions  
 Great Plains Lutheran High School  
 1200 Luther Ln NE  
 Watertown, South Dakota 57201 USA



To be completed by the student applying for enrollment (in English)

1. What language(s) do you speak?
  
2. Please tell us about your family: sisters, brothers, grandparents, etc.
  
3. Which subjects are of greatest interest to you?
  
4. What are your favorite activities or interests outside of school?
  
5. Of the qualities you possess, which one would you like people to admire most? Why?
  
6. What do others appreciate most about you?
  
7. Have you taken the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) test?    **YES**    **NO**  
Date \_\_\_\_\_    Score \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Have you taken a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test?    **YES**    **NO**  
Date \_\_\_\_\_    Score \_\_\_\_\_

9. List two or three things you hope to gain from studying at our school.

10. While attending GPLHS, I am may be interested in participating in (check all that apply):

- piano lessons
- band – instrument played \_\_\_\_\_
- choir
- athletics – sports played \_\_\_\_\_
- theater
- other \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are your plans after high school?

12. Do you know a student who went to Great Plains Lutheran High School?      **YES**      **NO**

If yes, how do you know that student?

How did you find out about GPLHS?





International

Consent and Permission Form

Student Medical Information

Family Name First Name Middle Name English Name (if any)

Please list all known medical conditions and allergies:

Please list medications the student takes regularly:

Insurance is required. Please provide the information below.

Medical Insurance Provider Policy # Group #

Alternate Emergency Contact

If you have a relative or friend who lives in the United States for us to contact in case of an emergency, please complete:

Name of Relative or Friend Relationship

Telephone Cell Phone Email Address

In case of an accident or illness, permission is hereby given to treat this student as required. With our signature below, we accept the responsibility for all costs thus incurred, and waive any claim against the school, association, its staff or chaperones for any and all causes, which may arise in connection with the above.

Consent and Permission

We are the parents/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_ who is a student at Great Plains Lutheran High School (GPLHS) in Watertown, South Dakota. We live in a foreign country and therefore will be unable to care for the day-to-day needs of our child while our child is in the United States attending GPLHS. Therefore we hereby appoint and authorize the Administration of Great Plains Lutheran High School to:

- 1. Sign any and all consent forms relevant to this student's enrollment at GPLHS including but not limited to, granting consent for all activities associated with GPLHS, and any forms relating to his or her enrollment at GPLHS, including but not limited to forms required by the State of South Dakota or the South Dakota High School Activities Association.
2. Sign any and all consent forms related to any necessary or emergency medical treatment for this student. I understand that I will assume full financial responsibility for the payment of services rendered.

Permission is granted for GPLHS to use this student's name and/or photo in GPLHS publications, including the GPLHS website and/or print or video publications. Yes No

Several classes require internet access for research and other class projects. This student is authorized to access the internet via school computers while at GPLHS. Yes No

Mother/Guardian Signature Date Father/Guardian Signature Date

If there is a change to any of the above information, please notify the school office.