

Electronics Policy

You might be wondering about using computers and other electronics while in Japan. You are allowed to bring a cell phone to use ONLY in the United States before you leave and after your plane lands back in the USA. You may not use a cell phone in Japan. You would not want to. Just turning it on may cost you hundreds of dollars. And it probably wouldn't work, anyway, as the technology is a bit different. If your family wants to contact you right away or you want to contact your family, your chaperone in Japan and the 4-H staff here in the USA will help. They are available 24/7. Use the "chain of communication". It works!

Laptop computers are not allowed on the exchange. Electronic game systems such as the PSP are discouraged, because you should be spending your time with your host family. If you enjoy video games, your host may have games which you can play together.

IPods are ok. Sometimes it's nice to sit and listen to your music or podcasts on the airplane or when you are resting with your host family. Compared to the USA, there are very few wireless locations in Japan, so plan to do all your downloads before you leave home.

Most delegates on the exchange enjoy writing and receiving letters and postcards. The letters can be saved as a great reminder of the fun you had during the exchange. The 4-H exchange program discourages computer use and would prefer that you use "snail mail". However, most host families have a computer and may allow you to use it. Try to limit your use to once a week. If you are accustomed to using a computer a lot and it's too difficult to go without a computer for 6 days, you may use it to email a few times a week for up to 30 minutes at a time. Learn how to sign onto your mail account from a remote location. We know that gmail works from Japan. We are not sure about the other email sites, such as hotmail or yahoo. Some Japanese families pay for their internet by the kilobyte, so please don't do online gaming and uploads or downloads. If you are like most Alaskans, you probably spend time on the computer to read your favorite sites, stay in touch with friends and when you are a bit bored. Keep in mind that the more time you spend sitting at a screen, the less time you will be observing and doing things in Japan. The more time you spend thinking about what is back home, the less time you will be spending thinking about where you are and

enjoying your time in Japan. Since the time in Japan is short, you'll want to concentrate on that.

Definitely, bring a camera! Bring an extra battery and the charger, if it has one. Check and see how many photos your memory chip will hold.

Delegates sometimes bring an extra memory chip for their camera, in case they fill the first one. You will want to take your camera wherever you go, so bring one of a size and weight you won't mind carrying.

If your host family lives in Western Japan, where the electric supply is different than the east, you may need a converter for anything which plugs into the wall. You can ask your host family if you will need a power converter, or you can request that Alaska 4-H ask States' 4-H to check on this with Labo in Japan. This information is also available online. When you have your host family information, use these resources to decide if you need to purchase a power converter from the travel section of a local store.