1. Start Planning Today
There are hundreds of programs available for US students to study abroad. Specific applications will vary from program to program. In most cases, program personnel will also have an interview with you to make sure you are a good fit for the program and / or a host family. Be sure to plan early because applications can be due four to nine months in advance. Age requirements vary, as well as cost. A detailed listing of organizations can be found at http://getstarted.csiet.org.

2. Talk to Your Parents
Be sure that your parents are aware of your desire to study abroad and are included in your research of programs.

3. Meet with your High School Counselor
Discuss your plan to study abroad with your school counselor. You will need to have a plan in place before you leave regarding the courses you should take abroad in order to stay on track for graduation when you return to Guilford County Schools (GCS). Please be sure you and your parents understand exactly what kind of documentation (official transcript) is needed from the school abroad in order for your GCS school counselor to evaluate your international transcript and transfer applicable course credits to GCS upon your return. Be sure to notify your school counselor if your schedule should change while you are studying abroad.

4. APPLY!
Most programs have a specific deadline. Know the deadline and be sure to turn in your application on time.

5. Understand Costs
Finding accurate cost information about a program is key to financial planning for study abroad. Research what services are and are not included in the program fee. Make sure you consider all costs and develop a budget. Inquire about scholarships (needs-based and merit based).

6. Health/Medical Insurance
Many make the mistake of assuming their health insurance will cover them wherever they go; however it often does not. Know before you go if you have coverage.

7. Visa, Tickets, & Passports
If not provided by your program, be sure to get your visa and tickets early. You can find student visa information at the US Department of State’s website: www.travel.state.gov. Visit http://travel.state.gov/passport to learn more about the documentation you will need to apply for a passport. Also, allow enough time when applying for your passport.

8. Pre-departure Orientation
Participate in all pre-departure events. Your program will provide you with dates of pre-departure events.

9. Say Goodbye!
Remember, be sure to notify your school counselor if your schedule should change while you are studying abroad.

10. Re-entry
Welcome Home! Meet with your high school counselor about your transfer credits and reenrollment.

For more information on study abroad and contact info, see http://bit.ly/GCSstudyabroad.