

Frequently Asked Questions by Host Families

Who can host an AFS Exchange Student?

Many kinds of families have a lot to offer our AFSers: two-parent households with young children or teenagers, single-parent families, families who have adopted children, foster parents, as well as couples or single people who do not have children or who have grown children.

What is required of an AFS Host Family?

As a host family, you would be agreeing to:

- Provide all meals for your AFS student.
- Provide your student with his or her own bed (sharing a room with a sibling is fine).
- Include him or her in the life and activities of your family.
- Provide the same support, care, and comfort as you would your own child.
- Attend an orientation before your student arrives.

Does AFS pay host families?

No, all of our families volunteer to host and are not paid. However, your family is entitled to a tax deduction for the time that your exchange student lives in your home.

Will we have to provide spending money for the student?

No. The student brings his or her own money, based on AFS's suggested amount of \$100-\$200 a month.

Will we have to pay medical expenses?

No. Each AFS student has secondary medical coverage so that, in an emergency, the student can be treated as soon as possible. There is also a 24-hour support phone number in case of any emergency.

What are their backgrounds?

AFS students come from more than 50 countries and from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. All students are between 15 and 18 years old, are attending high school in the U.S., have maintained good grades, and are seen as role models in their home schools and communities. In addition, we also seek families to host international teachers.

Do they speak English?

AFS participants have some level of English proficiency. Like American AFSers who study abroad, AFSers who are hosted in the U.S. have a strong desire to improve their language proficiency.

How long do students live with host families?

Year program students stay for 11 months; semester students stay for 6 months. Students are required to attend school while here.

When do students arrive?

Most students arrive in mid-August, and a small group of students arrives in mid-January.

Is the host family responsible for enrolling the student in school?

No, AFS is. AFS works with every high school to ensure enrollment of AFS Exchange Students in accordance with each school's policies and procedures. AFS enjoys an excellent reputation with high schools across the country, and we value a close working relationship with the schools that we serve.

What if problems arise?

Our volunteers have a lot of experience in placing students with families, and we provide extensive support throughout the year. AFS also provides intercultural training to both the family and the student to help with communication. However, if the placement does not work out satisfactorily, AFS assumes responsibility to move the student to another family.

Does AFS have rules for its students?

Yes. AFS students are expected to obey all the AFS rules and policies that are applicable while on their program. Should a student break a rule such as driving, hitchhiking, or partaking in illegal drugs, they could have their program terminated.

Hosted students are expected to obey U.S. laws. We also limit independent travel by AFSers. You will be provided with our *Host Family Handbook*, which contains information on these rules, at or before your pre-arrival orientation for host families.

What's next?

- Talk with your **family**.
- Make the **decision to host** a student!
- Submit a **Host Family Information Form**, available at www.afsusa.org.
- Speak with your volunteer who will set up an **interview with your family** and answer any questions you may have.
- Complete the **host family application** process.
- Work with your local volunteer, who will **match a student with your family**.
- Meet other host families and AFS Volunteers at the **pre-arrival orientation**.
- Your student **arrives, and the journey of growing and learning together begins!**
- Participate in **AFS activities** year-round.
- Receive on-going volunteer **check-ins and assistance**.
- Stay involved with AFS and continue to **change the world**.