



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures



Invite the World
into your School

AFS Exchange Students in U.S. Schools

AFS-USA has been a trusted leader in intercultural high school student exchange for more than 60 years. Accredited by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), more than 5,000 trained AFS Volunteers live in communities where we place our students. AFS works in partnership with educators to support their community in defying borders.

Who are AFS Exchange Students?

AFS welcomes more than 2,500 international high school students to the U.S. from 90 countries annually. Our students:

- Are seen as role models and leaders in their home communities;
- Must be accepted by an AFS office in their home country, as well by AFS-USA on the basis of academic achievement and motivation to study abroad;
- Are required make an effort to do their best regardless of whether grades transfer home;
- Have a tested level of proficiency in English and strive to increase language skills; and
- Are truly ambassadors for their countries and provide invaluable opportunities for global learning.

What does AFS provide?

- A host family screened and vetted in compliance with U.S. Department of State regulations;
- Student applications including academic records, a letter of recommendation from a teacher, immunization records, and assessments of English ability;
- A comprehensive secondary health insurance plan;
- A trained local volunteer to help students and families throughout their exchange together; and
- Orientations to students and families during their experience.

What does my school provide?

- Acceptance of enrollment prior to the student's departure from his/her home country. Signed by a school official, our Placement Acceptance Form is required by AFS and the Department of State;
- Enrollment in classes in the grade suitable to the student's capabilities; and
- Recognition of the student's achievement is at the discretion of your school; students are not expected to attain diplomas as a formal means of graduation.

When will AFS contact my school to enroll a student?

Under Department of State regulations, students cannot leave their home country until school placement and a host family have been finalized and all paperwork is completed. Having schools complete the Placement Acceptance Form indicating that they will allow an AFS Exchange Student into the school for the upcoming year is necessary and a priority.

AFS will contact your school as soon as we have a family interested in hosting. We may also contact you to ensure there is a slot for a student; AFS and your school may partner to find a host family. We are happy to receive host family referrals from high school personnel. Some placements are made in the summer as this is also when families come forward with hosting interest.

How are students and families supported during their year?

AFS Volunteers have a lot of experience in matching students with host families, and we provide extensive support throughout the year for both host families and schools. Each host family and student are assigned a liaison from the community who is the first line of support.

What kind of visas do AFS students have?

All of our students receive J-1 visas. A J-1 visa is an educational visa that the Department of State gives to students who participate on a program that has been accredited. They can only be given to high school aged students 15-18 and used for up to one academic year.

My school is dealing with budget and over-crowding issues. How are we able to enroll an exchange student?

The value an exchange student offers to your entire school community and the community-at-large cannot be underestimated. Our students are not required to take a specific coursework; their school curriculum can be flexible.

“ *Hosting AFS students is very relevant in this ever-shrinking world and now global economy where all people must be able to get along and learn from each other in order to be successful providers for their families and productive global citizens.* ”

-Richard Trogisch, Principal
The School Without Walls, Washington, DC

Local Volunteer Contact: