

**Topic: Working with clubs, in schools that do not have existing
AFS clubs
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Important note: Most existing AFS clubs were probably started decades ago, at a time when they could have official status with AFS USA. After some time, because of schools' and AFS's own concerns about ambiguity of liability and responsibility for funds, AFS discontinued official relationships with clubs. AFS Clubs maintain their names at the discretion of the related schools. Most schools will now prefer to name new clubs as "international" or "intercultural" clubs, not AFS clubs. There appear to still be some school-related AFS chapters.

According to workshop participants, from schools which do not already have AFS clubs, almost all of their schools tend to have rules that, in order to be recognized, new clubs must have a school employee as club advisor and a set minimum for numbers of new members. There are some school districts that do not have these rules, and there are some districts that may still allow new clubs to be called AFS Clubs.

What do clubs have to offer to AFS?

- contact with American high school and middle school students for promoting hosting and sending opportunities
- contact with American high school and middle school students for educating them about intercultural understanding
- opportunities for hosted students to interact with American peers
- contact with teachers and other school personnel, to build new relationships and promote intercultural understanding
- a group of club members who may be willing to help another club member raise funds for an AFS experience

Types of existing high school and middle school clubs that can offer access to American youth who may be interested in our mission:

- international clubs
- intercultural clubs
- foreign language clubs
- Amnesty International clubs
- leadership teams/clubs
- Scouts
- Tolerance-based clubs (GSA, STAND, etc.)
- 4H

- debate and forensics teams
- civics/government/student government groups
- church youth groups

What does AFS have to offer to clubs?

- intercultural understanding experiences in the club setting
- help integrate hosted students into the school
- information about intercultural understanding experiences and scholarships through AFS programs
- exposure to exchange students
- [country-specific cultural training guides](#)
- invitations to other activities for their students

Ways that AFS can help existing high school and middle school clubs:

- opportunities to participate in short-term AFS hosting weekends (meeting all usual event family requirements, of course)
- participation by hosted AFS students and returnees
- exchange student presentations
- local scholarships can help club members with costs of going abroad through AFS (domestic travel costs, visa fees, etc.)
- intercultural activities (see below)
- invitations to AFS social events and other activities (see below)
- intercultural learning curriculum (e.g. [Global Quiz](#))
- presentations and promotional materials about hosting and study abroad opportunities, scholarship information

Some new ideas:

- "piggyback" a youth group onto an existing AFS chapter (especially appealing in an area where a chapter serves two or more high schools without clubs); adult chapter can have qualifying officers and manage student group funds to meet AFS USA requirements, if funds are raised in the name of AFS
- partner with a school employee to start and/or advise a new school club
- find a school-related club that will regularly work with local AFS to help find and support hostfamilies, e.g., East Bridgewater, MA's high school band parents help the local AFS chapter find hostfamilies for students who play band instruments, then give those students opportunities to belong to the band, and to go along on their annual trip.
- offer fun intercultural workshops for clubs
- research international/intercultural Scout badges and offer "badge days"
- fundraise to get hosted students things like class rings, yearbooks, etc.

Activities that your AFS team can “sponsor” (help organize) for school clubs:

- international dessert night
- “International Day” at Six Flags or other theme park
- Ice skating, bowling, miniature golf, or other typical activities that hosted students should get exposure to
- Holidays from around the world (e.g. a Dia de los Muertos party)

Other notes:

- To find a club, check school websites and ask hosted students/returnees to ask around their schools
- Sometimes it is more important to find a teacher who is an AFS Champion to work with, even if he/she advises a club that seems less relevant to us (e.g. Life Skills Club), than trying to work with an uninterested teacher who advises an intercultural club.
- Don't forget about middle schools! Although those students are too young for typical AFS programs, it is to our benefit to develop a sense of global awareness and interest in hosting/study abroad early. Also remember that we offer [group programs](#) for educators of middle school programs.