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Welcome to Japan

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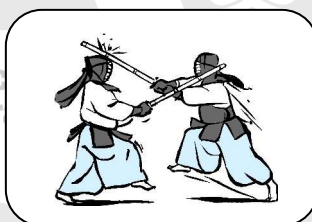
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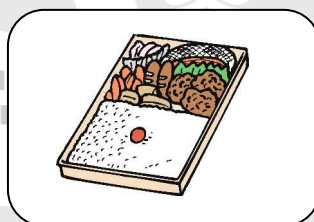
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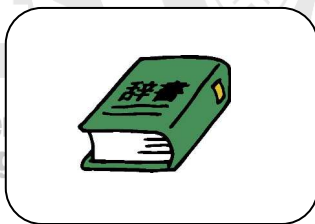
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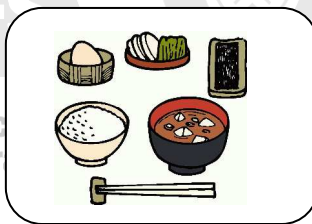
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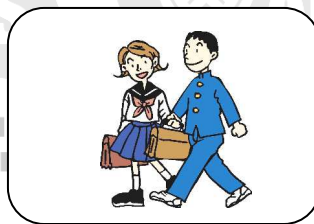
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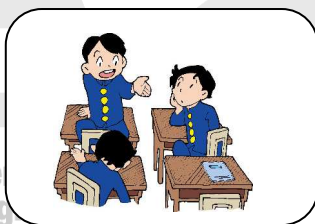
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AFS Intercultural Programs, Japan

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"Welcome to Japan" is written in easy English so that people who do not speak English as a first language can also understand what is written.

Welcome to Japan

Congratulations on being selected as an AFS participant and welcome to the AFS family. Your AFS host chapter, host family, host school and host community here in Japan are all looking forward to your arrival and to the intercultural experience which is about to begin.

"Welcome to Japan" is full of important information to help you get ready for your AFS experience in Japan. Read it carefully and give it to your parents or guardian to read as well. Then, **bring it with you to Japan** for the adventure of your life!!

"Things aren't right or wrong, they're just different." The AFS experience in Japan

Nobody knows exactly what kind of experience you will have because there is no typical AFS experience. This will be a unique experience that you share with your new family and friends in Japan.

Come with an open mind, one that is ready to see and experience many new things, but also one that is ready for some hard times. Almost every AFS participant has some hard times, but these are the times you learn the most about Japan, the Japanese and yourself.

Don't worry about making mistakes, every AFS participant does and it is these mistakes that allow you to learn more than you ever thought possible.

Always try your best to understand the Japanese culture and be aware that it is very different from your own. Be patient; remember that your host family is also experiencing many changes and is probably feeling the same way as you.

Comparing Japan and its culture with your own culture is not a good idea because neither is better than the other, they are just different.

**Introducing AFS Japan,
a volunteer organization**

AFS JAPAN was founded in 1955, the year after the first group of eight AFS Japanese high school students spent a year in the United States of America in 1954. More than 50 years later, about 1,300 volunteers in about 70 chapters across the country work throughout the year to help AFS students have the most enriching intercultural experience possible.

**Introducing your Chapter's volunteers
Help them to help YOU.**

Your host family is a volunteer.

Your host family hosts you on a voluntary basis and doesn't receive any financial aid from AFS. They open their homes to you, and pay the cost of having an extra person in the family. AFS asks your host family to provide you with a place to sleep and meals. Please keep in mind that anything else they give you or do for you is out of the kindness of their hearts.



Your host school is a volunteer.

Your host school allows you to go to school for no cost. You are expected to be an active student in the school.

Your chapter members are volunteers.

AFS does not pay chapter members for the work they do.

1 Getting ready to come to Japan, a checklist

There are many things you have to get ready before you depart for Japan. Here is a checklist of things you would be advised to consider.

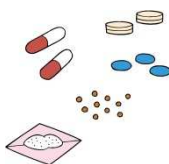
1-1 Medical Information

Dental & eye care and pre-existing conditions, etc.

AFS participants are responsible for dental and eye care, vaccinations and immunizations, and the treatment of illnesses or injuries you had sought or received treatment for, during the 18 month period before coming to Japan. If such care is needed, the participant's parents or guardian will have to give permission and send the necessary money.

Bringing medicine to Japan from your home country.

Sometimes it is illegal to bring into Japan "over-the-counter" medicine or prescription medication (medicine you can only get with a prescription from a doctor) commonly used in other countries, even if you bring a customs declaration and a copy of the prescription. These illegal items include some inhalers, some allergy and sinus medications and some anti-depressants. Students who want to bring these types of medicine should contact the Japanese Embassy in their home country or the Compliance and Narcotics Division, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in Japan <http://www.mhlw.go.jp> before departure, to confirm whether the particular medication can be brought into Japan. If the medication cannot be brought into Japan, bring a prescription in English and a Japanese doctor should be able to prescribe a similar, but not identical, medicine.



Vaccinations & Immunizations

There are no required vaccinations for entering Japan, but there is information available at the following web site. CDC National Center for Infectious Disease, Travelers' Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Glasses & Contact Lenses- bring a spare pair

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bringing a spare pair is a good idea.



The insurance that AFS provides does not cover expenses for glasses or contact lenses.

1-2 Clothes and shoes

After school, weekends & holidays

Casual clothes are the best. Use the following as a guide.

Spring (Mar.-May) & Autumn (Sept.-Nov.) : Long pants (jeans etc.), a light jacket or sweater, etc. on top of a long or short sleeved shirt.

Summer (Jun.-Aug.) :

T-shirts, blouses, skirts, cotton pants, Bermuda shorts, etc. A light long sleeved top is useful because shops etc. are air-conditioned.

Winter (Dec.-Feb.): Long pants (jeans etc.), sweatshirts, sweaters, a jacket, warm coat, warm socks, scarf and gloves.

Many people wear warm clothes {sweaters, jerseys, etc.} even inside the house.



Special occasions (especially if your school does not have a school uniform)

You will need at least one nice set of clothes. A pair of formal pants or a skirt {black, navy blue or gray} is recommended.

At school

Refer to the "school information sheet" for information about your school.

Most Japanese students wear uniforms, but if your host school doesn't have a uniform you will need to bring extra clothes. Even if your school does have a uniform, it can be useful to bring 2-3 white shirts/blouses and black or navy blue socks with you.

Gym suits {track suits} are necessary at school.

Please note: Your school will provide you with a hand-me-down uniform out of its uniform pool free of charge, but if it does not fit you, you have to buy your own.

Shoes- what to bring

If your foot size is bigger than 28cm (boys) or 25cm (girls), you will need to bring enough shoes for the whole year because it is very hard to find them in Japan.



You are free to decide how many pairs of shoes to bring, but be sure to bring at least 2 pairs of sneakers (sports shoes)

Shoes (Boys)

JPN	24	24.5	25	25.5	26	27	27.5	28
USA	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5
U.K.	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5
FRA	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44

Shoes (Girls)

JPN	22	22.5	23	23.5	24	24.5	25	25.5
USA	5.5-6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5-10
U.K.	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5
FRA	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41

1-3 Money & how to bring it to Japan, budgeting

Prices in Japan are among the highest in the world, so budgeting your money throughout the year is very important. Use the following as guide to your expenses.

Going out with your friends or on your

own

Train and bus fares, bicycle parking fees, event admission tickets and meals, etc.

At school

Classroom materials, such as fabric for sewing, gym shoes, gym suits {track suits}, club fees, transportation fees for away games, etc.

At the end of the year

Posting boxes back home.

In General

Pens and paper, stamps, toiletry articles, etc.

Bringing your money to Japan: Credit Cards & Cash Cards.

If you are a year or a semester program student, AFS Japan recommends that you bring ¥10,000 to ¥15,000 per month for pocket money. For those of you who are participating short-term program, ¥50,000 is recommended for the whole period of your stay. For your school trip (optional, see page 15 for details) you will need an extra ¥80,000 to ¥300,000.

Many AFS participants come with international cash cards with cashing services or a debit card.

If you bring cash, make sure that it is in Japanese yen or American dollars. Please read the following guide.

While Travelers Checks offered by major international brands such as Thomas Cook or American Express can be cashed at most banks, you do not have time to go to a bank which is open from 9:00 through 15:00 from Mon. through Fri. as you will be attending your school. Unlike in many countries, Japan does not have foreign exchange shops scattered throughout the cities, therefore, students that bring traveler's checks are advised to cash them at the airport on arrival.

Credit Cards with the "Plus" or "Cirrus" mark such as VISA, Master Card, American Express and Diners



Club credit cards can be used to withdraw cash from Post Office ATMs and major convenience store ATMs which are conveniently located throughout Japan. (this information is current as of July, 2012). For shopping, however, please keep in mind that Dinners Club and American Express are only accepted at a limited number of shops.

Some credit cards and cash cards issued overseas are not able to use in Japan. Before you come to Japan contact your credit card or cash-card company and check the locations of the ATMs you will be able to use in Japan.

The opening of a bank account by an international resident under 20 years old is almost impossible in Japan due to the Japanese government policy to prevent money laundering.

Please bring sufficient money with you when you come to Japan or make sure that your natural family deposits enough money in your credit card account so that you can withdraw cash from time to time.

1-4 Letter to your host family

It is a good idea for you and your parents or guardian to send a letter or even an e-mail to your new host family. This is a wonderful way to begin a special year!

1-5 Learn about your own community & country

Bring photographs, books, music, recipes, etc. that will help you introduce your country, since you may be asked to introduce your country at school or to participate in an AFS talent show. You could also bring your national costume and flag. These items are also helpful when introducing your host family to your life back home, and talking about them is a great way for you and your host family to get to know each other.

1-6 Confirm your Academic Requirements

Do you need to take certain subjects at school while you are in Japan?

If so, send an inquiry from your school's headmaster to the headmaster of your host school **through your AFS National Office** so that AFS Japan can make official inquiries to your host school. Ask for it well in advance and be aware that AFS Japan cannot guarantee that we can fulfill your requirements.

1-7 Odds & Ends

Passport size photographs-bring at least 3. You will need one (4x3cm face only) for your school ID card, AFS ID card, and Residence Card (of those participants under 16 years of age on arrival), etc.

- Bath towel & washcloth to use at the arrival orientation.
- Japanese Dictionary-You will need a dictionary to help you learn Japanese, and the best idea is to try and find one first in your own country, to help you get a head start on studying the language. If you cannot find one in your own country, you will probably have luck finding one in Japan, at major bookstores in metropolitan areas.
- A small gift for your host family Giving a small gift to your host family is a good way to show your appreciation. It does not have to be expensive, and it could represent your country or be something you made yourself. Choose between one main gift for the whole family or separate gifts for each family member.



2 Introducing Japan

2-1 Geography

Japan has four main islands; Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, as well as many other smaller islands. The capital is Tokyo, with a population of 12.8 million people that accounts for almost 10% of Japan's entire population. There are many volcanoes and earthquake faults across Japan which have combined to create beautiful mountains and hot springs, but at the same time cause small earthquakes on a fairly regular basis.

2-2 Climate

Japan has four distinct seasons. The rainy season starts in mid-June and lasts for a month or more and is followed by the hot and humid summer. The exception is Hokkaido where there is no rainy season and the summer is mild. In winter there is heavy snowfall in northern Japan and



along the Japan Sea side. There is also sometimes light snowfall in southern Japan and along the pacific coast.

2-3 Want to know more?

The chart shows average temperatures and rainfall in main cities across Japan.

Key: "T" stands for temperature in (F) Fahrenheit and (C) Celsius; "P" stands for precipitation in mm.

	Winter (Jan) T(F) T(C) P	Spring (Apr) T(F) T(C) P	Summer (Jul) T(F) T(C) P	Autumn (Oct) T(F) T(C) P
Sapporo	26.4 -4.1 110.7	44.1 6.7 60.9	68.9 20.5 67.2	52.3 11.3 124.1
Sendai	34.7 1.5 33.1	50.2 10.1 98.1	71.8 22.1 159.7	58.6 14.8 99.2
Tokyo	42.4 5.8 48.6	57.9 14.4 130.3	77.7 25.4 161.5	64.8 18.2 163.1
Niigata	38.1 3.4 170.9	50.9 10.9 100.5	74.7 23.7 144.6	60.8 16.0 170.0
Nagoya	39.7 4.3 43.2	57.4 14.1 143.3	78.8 26.0 218.0	63.7 17.6 116.9
Osaka	42.4 5.8 43.7	58.6 14.8 121.1	81.0 27.2 155.4	65.7 18.7 109.3
Fukuoka	43.5 6.4 72.1	58.6 14.8 125.2	80.4 26.9 266.4	65.7 18.7 80.9

For more information about Japanese geography, history, nature, culture, life style and basic language you can visit the following sites.

<http://www.jnto.go.jp>

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>

2-4 Japanese Language Get Started!

The Japanese writing system comes from Chinese, although the spoken language is completely different. After Chinese writing was introduced sometime in the fifth or sixth century, two phonetic scripts, hiragana and katakana (formed from parts of the Chinese characters), were developed and came to supplement the Chinese writing system.



Before you depart for Japan, AFS Japan will send you the language materials "Listen & Practice", through your national office. Use this to start studying Japanese before you come to Japan. We would also like to introduce you to a few free sites that may be both fun and useful.

e-learning

<http://www.erin.ne.jp/jp/>

<http://e-nihongo.tsukuba.ac.jp/>

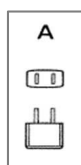
<http://www.kkjin.jp>

Improving your Japanese language skills is one of the best ways to show that you are adapting to Japanese life, and also to ensure that you have a successful year. AFS Japan organizes a Japanese test at the end of the year and those who take it will receive a certificate.

Students interested in taking the Japanese Proficiency Test may apply for the test upon arrival in Japan. You are responsible for the application fee and travel costs to and from the test site. For details, please access the official website operated by the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.

<http://www.jlpt.jp/>

2-5 Electricity



Electricity in Japan is 100 to 110 Volts. The Type A electrical plug is used in Japan. There are no columnar-shaped plugs or 3-pin plugs used in Japan but 2-flat-pin plugs are used instead.

3 AFS Japan

3-1 AFS Participant Support Program-your Chapter & LP (Liaison Person)

Your Chapter

AFS Chapters in Japan are made up of volunteers who coordinate AFS programs (sending & hosting) in your area. These volunteers often include former AFS participants, parents of former AFS participants, former host families, school teachers, etc.

Your LP (Liaison Person, pronounced "Elu Pii" in Japanese)

Every AFS participant will have an "LP" who will probably be a member of your Chapter. Your LP is there to help you, your host family and host school, so that

everyone has a rewarding experience. It is a good idea to keep in regular contact with your LP by visiting, phoning and meeting your LP at chapter events.

AFS has a policy of contacting all AFS participants at least once a month and so your LP may contact you just to say hello!

Your Chapter and LP will support you, your host family and your host school through the good times and the bad times. Don't hesitate to ask your LP or chapter members for help.

3-2 AFS National Office

The AFS National Offices are in Tokyo and Osaka.



AFS Intercultural Programs, Japan
Mitsuya Toranomon Bldg., 7th floor, 22-14
Toranomon 1-Chome, Minatoku-ku, Tokyo
105-0001, Japan

TEL: 03-6206-1911 / FAX: 03-3507-4300
Emergency after hours number:
090-4540-5180

3-3 Orientation

Arrival Orientation (2-3 days)

AFS Japan will meet you at the airport when you arrive in Japan and take you to the arrival orientation where you will be able to relax after your long flight and meet other AFS participants from around the world.

AFS volunteers will give you basic information about Japanese family life that will help you make a good start to your stay in Japan.

After the arrival orientation it is time to meet your host family! They will either pick you up at the arrival orientation or be waiting for you at a local station or airport.

Local Orientation (1-2 days)

This is organized by your local chapter and is about one month after you arrive in Japan. It is a time for all AFS participants to share their experiences of the first month. You will probably find that you are not the only one facing many challenges in your new lifestyle.

Pre-return Orientation (1 day)

This orientation will help you start thinking about going back to your own country, community and family, and the challenges you will face.

3-4 AFS Chapter Activities

Either your Chapter or other AFS volunteers may plan informal get-togethers, picnics or weekend exchange activities throughout the year. These are to help you make friends, give you the chance to share your experiences, and give you an opportunity to ask questions so that you can get the most out of your stay in Japan.

Chapters operate independently, and therefore activities vary from chapter to chapter.

4 Living in Japan

4-1 Residence Registration & National Health Insurance

On your arrival in Japan you will be required to register as a resident at your local public office and to enroll in the National Health Insurance scheme. Details concerning this process will be given to you after your arrival.

4-2 Telephone Contact with Family and Friends Back Home

Talking to friends and family back home on the phone is great, but you need to think about yourself and your host family when you do this.

Calling home too often prevents you from settling into your new lifestyle. Sharing your feelings in your native language with your natural family on the phone will probably make it more difficult for you to establish a good relationship with your host family, because it may make them feel left out and maybe even feeling uncomfortable. Instead of calling, write letters and limit phone calls to birthdays and other special occasions. Remind yourself how much you wanted to leave your own culture behind to experience a new one.

When you do have difficulties adjusting to your new life, e-mailing and calling home directly is not a realistic solution, because

in most cases your natural family does not know enough about the culture of Japan and your life in Japan to be able to give useful advice. Your LP or other members of your Chapter are the best sources of advice about life in Japan, and asking them without relying on your natural family may be a daunting, but essential, challenge, necessary for ensuring that you have a rich and rewarding AFS experience away from home.

4-3 Using a Mobile Phone

Most high school students now have mobile phones, but experience has made AFS fully aware that their use may cause adaptation difficulties for AFS participants. There also have been many crimes involving cell phones. AFS expects that you thoroughly read AFS Japan's material, "*The Guidelines for Communications and Internet*", in the appendix.

- You should fully talk about the rules and limits of using a mobile phone with your host family and LP. It is your responsibility to follow the rules and limits that you have agreed to.
- Please see page 5 of "Tips for Personal Safety"



4-4 Using the Internet

Each host family's access to, and ideas about, the Internet may be different. Be sure to ask your host family whether you should bring your own computer or use their computer. Some schools may allow you to use school computers.

- Use the Internet only with the permission of your host family or host school.
- Discuss the rules for using the Internet with your host family and host school.



- Use or give out your host family's e-mail address only with their permission.
- Posting any personal information, such as your name, address, host school, or other information which may identify you or your host family is not recommended.
- Pay careful attention when posting photographs or video images. Receive permission from all people appearing in the images before posting them.
- Posting any material whose contents may be illegal, violate AFS rules, violate host school rules or that may put yourself or others at risk is *off limits*.
- Posting of anything which is untruthful about your host family, host school, or AFS, or that violates someone's privacy or good name is not acceptable. Also, expressing ideas or using "four-letter-words" which may hurt people's dignity, or which unjustifiably attack another person will not be tolerated.
- Do not participate in Internet auctions.
- Avoid opening unknown e-mail messages.
- For further information, please carefully read AFS Japan's "*Guidelines for Communication and Internet*" in the appendix.

4-5 Relationships in the local community (including other AFSers)

Deepening your relationship with your host family, your host school, and the local community is the best way to have a successful experience in Japan. Spending time with people you knew back home and people from your own or

other countries may hinder this. There are now many Japanese people living in many countries and there may be people from your own country living in your host community. AFS asks that you don't spend time with friends and people you knew in your home country while you are here in Japan, and that you limit the time you spend with other foreign residents. Spending too much time with these people is likely to cause your host family and school friends to be disappointed with you, and to question your reasons for coming to Japan. It will also prevent you from improving your Japanese language skills, which in turn, makes it more difficult to make Japanese friends. Remind yourself of your reasons for coming to Japan.

4-6 Some things you should AVOID doing in Japan

- Being late (5 minutes early is best)
- Chewing gum during class or when speaking to elders.
- Hugging and kissing in public.
- Going out in clothes which do not

adequately cover your body such as shorts, tank tops, short tops which expose your belly button, and halter tops, or any other clothing which displays a lot of skin.

- Sitting on a table or desk.
- Sitting on the floor with your legs crossed.
- Walking around while eating and drinking. (you should sit down or stand still)
- Blowing your nose into a handkerchief.
- Putting a used tissue into your pocket. (you should put it in the rubbish)
- Putting on make-up and combing your hair in public.
- Wearing a cap inside a building

You may see some young people doing these kinds of things but that does not mean that it is OK. Remember, being bad mannered is not in your own best interests.

5 The Japanese Household



A typical Japanese family is hard to describe because just like in any country, each family's lifestyle and beliefs are different. The important thing is not to compare your host family with your natural family. Of course they are different but they have one thing in common – their willingness to care for you. Hopefully these guidelines can make it easier for you to adjust to your new life with your Japanese host family. And remember, you are not going through this alone – your host family is making adjustments too!

Multiple family Placements

Some students may have a multiple family placement. If you have this kind of placement, be positive and think of the wider total experience.

Changing Families

A family change is not something that the participant can just ask for and get automatically, without making strong efforts to improve the situation.

A family change is possible, but only as a last resort because changing families greatly affects all of those involved.

Careful consideration is given to every family change situation to come up with the best solution for all of those involved.

Changing Schools and Community

In Japan a *school change* and/or *community change* is almost impossible unless a participant needs to change schools as a result of their host family's personal circumstances and the hosting chapter cannot find a replacement host family for their hosted student in the immediate area. It will take at least a month to find a new host school as the Japanese school is quite reluctant to admit an extra student in the middle of the school year. What is most likely to happen is that a new school principal will contact the former host school principal to directly check whether or not the student had any problems at the former host school. In Japanese culture, an attitude of "sticking to it" or "sticking it out" (Ganbaru) is highly valued.

5-1 Introducing the Japanese Family

Nuclear families are the most common but there are also extended families with three generations living together. The father often appears to be the major family decision maker, but the mother also has a strong say, especially in relation to matters such as children's education and family finances. Respecting elderly people and maintaining close ties with relatives is considered to be very important.



5-2 Fire prevention at home

Most Japanese houses are made of wood and are situated very close together. Because of this everyone is always aware of the need to prevent fires and you need to be extremely careful when using kerosene, gas, and



electric heaters, etc. Never put laundry or other flammable items near kerosene, gas, or electric heaters, including the kotatsu and always turn off heating appliances when you leave the room or go to bed.

5-3 Noise at home

Most houses are small and rooms are relatively open. Please think about other people when you are listening to music, watching TV, or even going up and down the stairs. Noises like these will annoy other people in the family, especially if your host brothers or sisters are studying.

5-4 Your bedroom: someone may use it during the day

It has been common for bedrooms to be used for other purposes during the daytime. Someone in your host family may have to go into your room to get something that is stored in it, or go through it to get to the balcony to hang out the washing. Your cooperation in these cases is appreciated.

5-5 Shoes: taking them off before you go inside.

There is a big difference between 'inside' and 'outside' in the Japanese house, with the goal of not allowing dirt into the house. Because of this, shoes are taken off in the entranceway before stepping up into the house. Also, people do not walk barefoot in the entranceway, on the balcony, or the lawn, and do not put bags down on the ground outside as this will result in dirt being carried into the house.



There will be a shoe cupboard in the entranceway for your shoes. Slippers are sometimes worn inside the house, but always take them off before going into a tatami (grass mat) room. There are also special toilet slippers that are worn only in the toilet area (toire).

5-6 A fluffy futon to sleep on

If you sleep on a futon, you will be expected to fold it up and put it away in the closet in the morning so that the room can be used for other purposes. Please ask your host family how to place the futon in the closet correctly. Only sick people are allowed to eat or drink in a futon (there is no breakfast in bed) and it is rude to walk across a futon. On sunny days, futons are placed outside in the sun. This dries the futon out and makes it fresh and fluffy to sleep on.

5-7 Washing your clothes (laundry and dry cleaning)

- Most families do the washing (laundry) everyday, especially in the hot and humid summer. Clothes are usually hung outside to dry and clothes dryers are not widely used. In the rainy season when it rains continuously, ask your host family how to get your clothes washed and dried. Some families consider it a part of their children's responsibilities to wash their own underwear. If you do your own washing, make sure to use a washing net for delicate items. Every family has different rules for using the washing machine so ask your family what to do.
- Dry cleaning is very expensive, so consider whether or not you are willing to pay this cost when deciding whether to pack clothes that can only be dry-cleaned.

5-8 Bath time

Bathing in Japan has a long history and is an important part of the culture. Baths are usually taken in the evening, and the idea is to wash after a long day and relax before going to bed. There are many rules about taking baths and these sometimes vary from family to family.



- The average bath time is 20 minutes in total (washing & soaking).
- Keep the bath water clean for everyone. Make sure soap does not fly into the tub while you are washing, and be sure to rinse ALL your soap off before getting into the tub.
- Some families have a fixed bathing order. If you don't get in the bath when it is your turn, you will keep everyone that comes after you waiting.
- Showers in the morning. Some young people prefer this, but it can cause problems because other family members can't use the bathroom (usually one per/house) and hot water cannot be used simultaneously in the kitchen. Please ask your host family what is appropriate.
- **Do's & Don'ts in the bath.**
 - ✧ The dressing room is considered part of the bathroom so don't go in when somebody is in the bath.
 - ✧ Don't wash your towel or soak your hair in the tub, everyone uses the same water!!
 - ✧ Try to remove your hair from the drain cover and make sure there is not any hair left on the floor.
 - ✧ Make sure that the floor in the dressing room is not wet when you have finished.
 - ✧ Cover the bath (with the 'lid' provided) when you have finished to keep the water hot.
 - ✧ Even if you are the last to use the bath, don't pull the plug out because the hot water is often used later for other purposes in the name of ecology.

- You may have the chance to visit a public bathhouse (sento) or go to a hot spring (onsen). Some people feel uncomfortable about using a communal bath, but this is another part of the Japanese culture. Who knows, you might even come to love it!!

5-9 Deodorant and perfume

Many young people are sensitive to body odor and use deodorant but strong smelling perfume is not popular.

5-10 Food at home

Always try to eat everything at least once!

- Even if you don't like something, try not to make a strange face or say a word such as "Yuck!" because this will really hurt the feelings of the person who has cooked it for you. When something tastes good however, saying "oishii!!" will make the chef happy.
- Meal times will depend on the schedule of your host family but generally the evening meal is the main meal of the day and is usually eaten around 6 to 8pm.
- Rice is very popular and while some families eat rice three times a day, others may have bread for breakfast, and bread or noodles for lunch.

5-11 Food at school

At school students eat a packed lunch 'Obento' from home, buy something at the school canteen, or eat at the school cafeteria. If your host mother makes you an 'Obento', please remember the following:



- If there is something in the 'Obento' that you don't like, take it home and discuss it with your host mother, don't

just throw it away.

- Don't forget to express your appreciation everyday to your host mother for waking up early to prepare your packed lunch.
- A good way to show your appreciation is to wash your lunch box by yourself after you get home. Another way is to say "Oishikatta" (it was very good) or "arigato" (Thank you).

5-12 Religion, allergies, and philosophical principles about food.

In Japan there are very few people who have special diets due to religious, cultural, or philosophical principles, and because of this your host family may find it difficult to understand your needs at first.

If you cannot eat certain foods due to religion etc. explain this to your LP and host family on the first day. Also be aware of the following points.

- Buying Halal meat is almost impossible, so please do not expect your host family to buy such food for you.
- All Moslem students are expected to share the same kitchen utensils and dishes with their host family.
- Special diets related to religious or philosophical principles can impose a heavy burden on your family unless they share the same principles. We do not expect you to change your principles, but please be flexible and try to avoid being too rigid in your position.
- Please show your appreciation, if your host family changes their dietary habits in order to meet your needs.

5-13 Table Manners and Eating

- In some families everyone has their

own seat for meal times and it is common for family members to have their own chopsticks, rice bowl, and teacup.



- AFS participants often say that some Japanese dishes taste too salty. Japanese people eat the main dish, rice, and miso soup alternately. Try eating this way and enjoy the combination.
- Chopsticks are used everyday but knives, forks, and spoons are also widely used.

The following are examples of bad manners when using chopsticks.

- ✧ Pointing at people with your chopsticks.
- ✧ Pulling a dish or a bowl closer to you with your chopsticks.
- ✧ Moving your chopsticks back and forth over the dishes while you are deciding what to eat.
- ✧ Passing food from one person to another, using chopsticks.
- ✧ Leaving your chopsticks sticking up in the rice bowl.

(These last two are customs associated with the funeral service.)

- Small dishes (rice & soup bowls) should be held aloft when eating from them.
- Pouring soy sauce or any other sauce onto boiled white rice is bad manners.
- Making a slurping noise while eating noodles is not bad manners.
- Blowing your nose loudly, especially at the table is bad manners.
- Always ask your host mother if it is all right to eat something from the refrigerator because you may be about to eat an important part of the evening meal.



5-14 Tips for getting along with your host family

Year after year returnees stress the importance of developing trust. Do your best to be aware, responsible, and reliable.

Keep in mind that you may not know how to do things "right"

The lifestyle and way of thinking of your host family will differ from that of your natural family. Try to fit into your host family's own daily schedule of bedtimes, mealtimes, making appointments, curfews, turns for taking a bath and so on. The best way to learn about life in Japan is to observe and do as others do and ask questions. You should keep asking until you're sure you understand.

Obtain permission from your host family before going out

Always tell your host family of your plans in advance and obtain their permission before going anywhere. Don't say 'yes' to a friend's invitation without confirming it first with your host family.

Getting home in time

Most parents expect that family members are home in time for the evening meal. If you need a later time for some reason, talk about it with your host family and make sure that you are home by the agreed time.

Borrowing things from your host family (and giving them back)

If you borrow things from members of your host family, be sure to ask when you should give it back. Even when you are only using things which are always in common use around the house, such as scissors, nail clippers, the iron, and so on, be sure to return them to where they are usually kept, so that all members of your host family have easy access to them.

Responsibility of the Host Parents

Many AFS participants feel that their host parents are "nosy" and that they give

them little privacy or freedom. Host parents consider it their responsibility to protect and guide their AFS participant during their stay with them. They want to help their student have a rewarding experience in Japan and to return home safely at the end of the year. In Japan, parents of high school student are held responsible for their actions and so parents quite often express their opinion.

Cleaning Your Room, Keep it Tidy

Remember that your room is your host family's property and you are expected to keep it clean without being told. Please



ask your host family what parts of the room you should clean, how often, and how to use the vacuum cleaner.

Energy and Water Conservation

Everyone tries to be very careful about the amount of electricity, gas, and water they use. Energy costs in Japan have always been very high, and recently, people have become even more sensitive to the importance of the conservation of resources and saving energy, as a result of their experiences with natural disasters and the resulting energy shortages. It is also extremely important to conserve water; it is a precious resource in a densely populated country.

Here are some more suggestions for concrete ways you can help your host family conserve resources and keep their utility costs within reason.

- Instead of wearing just a T-shirt and turning on the heater, put on a sweater and some socks. Consider the weather when you choose your clothes to avoid using extra energy.
- Spend as much time as possible in the same room with your host family, so that they will get by with heating fewer rooms.

- Turn off the lights, computers, and all other electrical appliances, especially heat and air conditioning, when you are not in a room.
- Limit your shower time and turn off the shower while you soap your body and hair.
- Try to keep your room as airtight as possible when using the heat and air conditioning.

Helping around the House

Try to do your share of the housework, as this will also help you fit into your family quicker. You can help with such things as washing & drying the dishes, grocery shopping, cleaning the house, putting out the garbage (rubbish), taking the dog for a walk or sweeping the street in front of your house. Offer your help, but always make sure that you know what you are doing and ask your host family if you are not sure.



Family Get-togethers

Many families gather around the dinner table or in the living room after dinner and spend quality time together. One of the best ways of maintaining communication with your host family is to be part of this gathering instead of going to your room right after dinner.

Weekends

Every family will spend their weekend differently. Some just stay at home to rest while others may like to go out and enjoy the outdoors. Sometimes it may seem that there are no special activities planned, but your host family may not like it if you sleep in every weekend, so ask what time you should get up by. Even if there is nothing special planned, your host family will be happy to spend time with you at home and may not be happy if you go out every weekend.

Try to Be the One Who Breaks the Ice First!

Everyone is nervous to start with so make a special effort to get along with your host family. It will be worth it

6 School Life in Japan (Not Applicable to Language study Program)



A very big part of your year will be spent at school. At school you are expected to obey the rules, follow the same schedule as other students, join in after school activities, and mix with as many students as possible. This will all require a lot of energy, but the experiences of past AFS participants prove that this effort will be well rewarded in terms of friendships, feeling positive about yourself, and gaining an understanding of the Japanese culture.

If you have any questions about school life, ask your homeroom teacher or school advisor.

6-1 The Japanese Educational System

The 6 years of elementary school and 3 years of junior high school are compulsory education. After that 97% of students go on to 3 years of senior high school. Some private and public schools combine junior high and senior high school for a 6 year (Secondary) program. University is 4 years. <http://www.mext.go.jp>

Pupils usually go to the elementary and junior high school closest to their home, but have to take entrance exams to get into secondary school, senior high school, and university. If they want to enter private elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school, they have to take entrance exams to get into these as well.

The School Year is from April to March. Most schools have a summer holiday from mid July to the end of August and a winter holiday from late Dec. to early Jan., but there are regional differences. For example, the winter holiday is longer in Hokkaido where it is very cold. Public

schools have classes five days a week from 8:30am to late afternoon, but the number of public high schools that have classes on Saturday mornings is on the increase. Private schools also have classes on Saturday mornings. There are mid-term and final exams.

School events - Activities throughout the year include Bunkasai (school festival), Tai'ikusai (sports day), chorus competition, excursions and school trips, etc.

Getting to school - Many students travel a long way to school (30 minutes one way by bicycle or 90 minutes door to door by train is not uncommon) and sometimes are caught up in the morning rush hour, especially in big cities. Bicycles, buses, and trains, and at times a combination of the 3, are the most popular ways to get to school. If you cannot ride a bicycle, try learning before you leave for Japan.



Lunch - Japanese students eat a packed lunch 'Obento' from home, buy lunch at the canteen, or eat at the cafeteria. Students do not go home for lunch.

6-2 School Trip (see the information sheet from your school for details)

This is a 2-3 day trip to a popular tourist destination in Japan, and recently, sometimes overseas. For almost all students, this is the highlight of the year. It is recommended that you participate, however you have to pay for it yourself. Please take note of the following;

- It is optional (some Japanese students do not go).
- You will have to pay the money before the payment deadline.

- If you apply for the school trip and then cancel because you can't get the money, you will have to pay a cancellation fee.
- Neither your host school/family, nor AFS will pay for the school trip.
- If the trip is to a country overseas, you will need to obtain a "Parental Permission for Travel with Host Family or School" form from your natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s) via your hosting chapter.

6-3 Homerooms & Classes

- Students are grouped in "homeroom" classes that consist of 35 to 40 students. Students do not change classrooms during the day; teachers visit the homeroom to give lessons.
- Most AFS participants will follow the same class schedule as their homeroom classmates. It will be difficult to follow classes at first, but going to every class and showing an interest in what is happening is very important.
- Don't be late for school; punctuality is very important in Japan.
- Students are expected to stay at school until the end of the last class every day.
- If you have self study classes, stay in the room you have been given and don't walk around the school.



6-4 Teachers

Students call teachers "Sensei" or by their last name with "sensei" added on the end. You should speak to teachers using polite Japanese and show respect to them even outside the classroom and school.

6-5 Making Friends at school

- School is the center of social activities for people your age in Japan and so this is where you will find it easiest to make friends. The sooner you find a circle of friends, the happier you will be at school. It may not always be easy to make friends, but here are some tips.

- ✧ Spend as much time in your homeroom as possible.
- ✧ Go to school a little early. Many students do so to talk or relax before classes.
- ✧ Break time is a good chance to spend some time with your classmates.
- ✧ Eat lunch with your classmates.
- ✧ Participate positively in as many school events as possible.
- ✧ Make a special effort to talk to everyone during the first month. Your enthusiasm and positivity will be noticed, and your classmates will likely pay you back with friendship!
- ✧ Try hard to learn as much Japanese as possible.



- There is a clear distinction between seniors and juniors in Japan. Senior students are called "sempai" and junior students are called "koohai." You will notice that "koohai" students use polite language when speaking to their "sempai" and "sempai" usually look after the "koohai". This is especially noticeable in cultural and sports clubs.
- AFS participants from western countries are often surprised when they see girls (or boys) holding hands with each other or sitting on their friend's laps but this simply shows that they are friends and does not have any sexual implications.

- Parents and teachers do not think that high school students should date or have a steady relationship at this age.
- How to avoid misunderstandings on this issue.
 - ✧ Don't spend time alone in a classroom etc. with a person of the opposite sex.
 - ✧ Don't touch members of the opposite sex in front of other people.
 - ✧ Individual dating (as opposed to going out in groups) indicates that the relationship is progressing well, so don't be surprised if the person you casually asked out takes it much more seriously than you were planning.

6-6 Club Activities

Joining a club will give you the chance to make friends and learn more about the Japanese culture. There will be a wide range of club activities at your school but most clubs meet all the year round (they are not seasonal). This means that the ski club trains hard all summer and the baseball club trains hard all winter. This also means that students generally join only one club and remain in it until graduation.

For you it is a good idea to wait a month or so before deciding which club(s) to join. If you only join one club, you will become good friends with others in the club and have a sense of achievement. Joining more than one club on the other hand, will give you the chance to learn more about Japanese culture.

AFS does not pay for club activities so find out how much it will cost for equipment and other expenses, such as train tickets to match venues, for the club you want to join. You can also try asking the club teacher about borrowing equipment for the year.

School life and club life are important, but make sure you have time for your host family. Remember, your host family expects you to spend time with them.

- Common Sports clubs - Kendo, Judo, Aikido, Kyudo, Baseball, Soccer & Basketball.

Sports club practice hours are long and the training is hard. Oftentimes practice is held every day, even on holidays and during the summer vacation, and it may sometimes be held early in the morning. Please be aware that even if you join a sports club, the High School Athletic Federation prohibits exchange students from participating in **official** matches.



- Common Cultural clubs - Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy, Brass Band, Handicrafts, Literature, and Animation.



Cultural clubs usually require less time than sports clubs, and some meet only once a week. (This does not include the brass band club and chorus club, which practice almost every day.)

6-7 Study Habits

To get into a respected university, high school students study hard and many go to a "juku", private cram school, after school and on weekends. Students rarely do things together after school and so it is a good idea to make the most of life at school.

6-8 School Rules

There are many school rules and they apply not only to your school life, but also to your life outside of school as well. It is your responsibility to follow these rules. Breaking them will mean that you don't value having a good relationship with your host family and teachers, and this may result in you facing an early return.

The following are examples of school rules, some of which you may find unexpected. School uniform rules (color of socks, length of skirt), No part-time jobs, hairstyle rules, No accessories (rings, earrings, hair bands,

nail polish, make-up, body piercing, and tattoos), and curfew rules.

6-9 Cleaning duties

There is no cleaning staff and so students take turns cleaning classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, the gym, toilets, and other school facilities every day after classes finish. There are also big clean-up days several times a year.

6-10 Physical Examinations

High schools are required by law to give an annual physical examination to students to make sure that they are in good health and able to participate in school activities with other students. You are expected to do the test if your host

school asks you to.

6-11 Diplomas and Transcripts of grades

Host schools do not have to issue diplomas or give credits to exchange students, but if you ask, your school will probably issue a certificate of attendance if you have maintained a good attitude at school.

6-12 Facial Hair

Whiskers, mustaches, and beards are not widely accepted in Japan and most schools have guidelines prohibiting facial hair. Boys should shave before going to school.

7 General Information During Your Stay

Where does your participation fee go?

Your fee is divided among AFS International and the National Offices in your own country and in Japan. AFS International uses the fee to pay for international operations, the emergency travel fund and your medical insurance during your stay in Japan. There is also an international development fund to help AFS partners and promote projects for program growth. Your national office uses the money for recruiting, screening, coordination with AFS Japan, pre-departure/post-return orientations, support for parents while you are away, your international flights, office administration and volunteer development.



During your stay in Japan, your fee will be used for coordination with your national office, transportation between the international airport and your hosting community, arrival orientation, pre-return orientation, school related expenses such

as transportation, local support and activities, office administration and volunteer development. It is generally accepted that the cost of running the program is more than what you pay as a participation fee and the remainder comes from the hearts of the many people supporting you.

7-1 Postal Services



The Japanese postal system is very reliable. You can buy stamps from post offices, convenience stores and train stations' kiosks. You will see red mailboxes everywhere.

Within Japan postcards are ¥52 and regular sized letters under 25g are ¥82. International mail rates are ¥70 for postcards & ¥90-¥130 for regular sized letters up to 25g.

International parcel post (boxes up to 30 kg) can be sent to most countries. Surface (by ship) mail rates for a 10 kg. package are; Asia ¥5,300, North &

Central America, Europe, Oceania & Middle East ¥ 6,750, South America & Africa ¥ 6,250. Use this to think about how much money you will need at the end of the year for sending things home.

For details, please access the Japan Post website below.

<http://www.post.japanpost.jp/>

EMS (Express Mail Service) covers is the fastest way to send things home. It also has a tracking system so that you can follow your package all the way home via the internet.

7-2 Telephones

Your Host Family's phone

All phone calls in Japan cost money, even a local call to your neighbor. Always ask your host family for permission to use the phone and keep your calls short.

Public Telephones



Public phones use coins, telephone cards and IC (integrated circuit) cards. Green public phones are analog, and the gray ones are a digital/IC type. International calls can be made from the digital/IC phones. Ask your host

family where a public telephone near your house is.

International calls (see page 7 about AFS policy on phone calls home)

You are responsible for your international phone call bills.

- Collect calls & operator assisted calls (station to station & person to person calls): Ask your host family how to dial the operator.
- Direct calls: How to make an international phone call. Dial (Access No.) + 010 + country code + area code (take off the first 0) + local number. (In Japan many companies offer phone services and all have different access numbers such as: 001, 0041, 0061, etc.)
- Prepaid cards: You can buy prepaid cards (¥ 3,000 - ¥ 10,000) at some convenience stores, etc. Many companies offer these cards and the rates differ according to the country they base their services on. Look around for the cheapest phone service for your country.

8 Japanese culture & society:

Things you should know about

8-1 Religion

Shintoism and Buddhism are the major religions in Japan. They do not have any religious restrictions (about food, praying etc.) and so Japanese people are not accustomed to such restrictions. If you do have religious requirements (food, praying, etc.) you should explain them to your host family. AFS will help you with this.

You will find that many Japanese people say they have no specific religious beliefs, but you will also find that both Shinto and

Buddhist customs and rituals are indeed embedded in everyday life by way of traditional events and ways of thinking. There are also people who practice other religions such as Christianity and Islam.

8-2 Communication

● Language

- ✧ Being able to speak English is not a requirement for becoming an AFS host family. If you have to use



English, speak slowly and clearly and don't use slang. Writing down the word you are trying to say is a good idea, too.

- ✧ For many AFS participants it takes at least 6 months until they feel comfortable using Japanese so don't be discouraged if you feel your Japanese is only progressing slowly.
- ✧ There are different levels and forms of Japanese, which depend on the ages and relationship of the people involved. For example, while "Ohayoo" (Good Morning) is used between friends, "Ohayoo-gozaïmasu" is used towards elders and superiors. When speaking with people older than yourself (this includes your host parents, teachers etc.), using the polite form is necessary.
- ✧ It is not polite to use the personal pronoun "anata" (you) when you speak to older people. You should use "(name of the person) + San" or their title "Okaasan" or "Sensei".
- ✧ There are certain words that only men use and certain words that only women use. Mixing these words up will cause people to give you a surprised look.
- ✧ Your host parents will often refer to themselves as "Otoosan" or "Okaasan" instead of using the personal pronoun "I". Teachers also often call themselves "Sensei".
- ✧ In Japanese there are many words that have been adopted from other languages and sometimes the pronunciation and meaning has changed and does not make sense to non-Japanese speakers.
- ✧ In a conversation, "Hai" (Yes) usually means that the person you are talking to is listening to what you are saying, **but does not**



always mean that they agree with you.

- Expressing your Feelings

- ✧ Japanese people do not always express their feelings openly and this can sometimes confuse AFS participants. Even if your host family does not smile when they first meet you, that does not mean that they are unfriendly or do not like you.
- ✧ Saying "No" directly is not part of the Japanese culture. Instead Japanese people use indirect expressions which indicate that you should not do something. Your host family may say "iidesuyo" (it's ok), but actually mean "dame desu" (No!). In Japan "Yes" is not always "Yes". This is very confusing, but you will soon get used to it and begin to understand the Japanese way of communication.
- ✧ Praising a member of your own family in public is not a part of the Japanese culture. In fact, you often hear parents saying things like "My child is very lazy". You will come to learn that this is just a part of everyday conversation and should not be taken seriously.

- Greetings in the Japanese culture (Aisatsu あいさつ)

- ✧ Bowing is a polite, and often used, way to greet people. There is no custom of hugging or kissing as a way of greeting, and people do not smile at or speak to people whom they do not know while shopping or walking down the street.
- ✧ You will hear "Arigatoo" (thank you), "Gomen-nasai" (I'm sorry), and "Sumimasen" (excuse me) all the time in daily conversation, and it is sometimes confusing to know which one to use. Learning



what to say and when to say it will help you communicate easier.

- **Self-assertion (Jikoshuchoo じこしゅちょう)**
- **Self-expression (Jikohyoogen じこひょうげん)**

- ✧ Japanese culture values harmony, and rather than arguing compromise is preferred even in controversial situations. Debating has only recently begun to be taught in some schools.
- ✧ As a result, "considering other's feelings" and "placing yourself in another's position and acting accordingly" are highly respected ways of acting. Speaking out and pushing your point of view is generally not a part of the Japanese culture, and often gets a negative response.
- ✧ Self-praise and lengthy excuses (which you may intend only as explanations) are not taken positively. In Japan you will be judged by your actions, not by your words.

- **Jokes (Joodan じょうだん)**

There are jokes in every culture, but the type of joke can vary widely. Japanese jokes take the form of puns and teasing. Sarcasm and other forms of dry humor are not appreciated and may cause serious misunderstandings.

8-3 The Independence of Young People

- In Japan high school students are not independent members of society. They are considered to be children, and their parents and teachers are responsible for what they do, and often offer strict and wide ranging advice about using money, school life, friends, academic performance and child's future classes, to name a few.
- AFS students (especially those with a Euro/American way of thinking) often

complain that Japanese high school students are childish or immature. However, please be aware that what defines maturity is different from culture to culture. In the Japanese culture, thinking about others first and being able to relate to others politely, are the traits which describe a mature, respectable high school student.

8-4 The Roles of Men and Women

Although things are slowly changing, the roles of men and women in Japanese culture have traditionally been separated. One example of this is the different ways that men and women speak. Also, don't be too surprised if you notice that even now, boys and girls tend to socialize mostly with members of their own sex.

8-5 Giving and Receiving Gifts (Purezento/Omiyage)

- Opening a gift as soon as you receive it is now becoming more acceptable than in the past, but you should always ask "akete-mo ii desu ka?" (May I open this now?), to avoid an



- In Japan a child (remember this includes high school students) who is given something or receives a favor will say 'thank you' straight away, and then tell their parents about what they received (this includes material gifts or food eaten while visiting at their friends home). The parent then says a simple 'thank you' the next time he/she sees the giver at the shops or in the neighborhood. Saying 'thank you' on behalf of a group member in this way is one of the most important parts of community life in Japan, so please inform your host family members about any gifts, so that they do not feel embarrassed in front of others for not having said 'thank you'.

- When visiting someone's house, it is customary to take a small, inexpensive gift such as cakes or flowers. Also, when going somewhere or taking an overnight trip, small and inexpensive local products are often given as souvenirs for family and friends when you get home.



8-6 Foreign Nationals (Gaikokujin)

- There are now more and more foreign nationals living in Japan but in some small towns you may be the first person to come from a foreign culture. People who have not met many people from foreign cultures may display an awkward attitude when they first see you.
- Sometimes people from foreign cultures (called "Gaijin" (がいじん)), get too much unwanted attention, such as being stared or pointed at. Try not to be too annoyed, since it is likely to be as a result of curiosity rather than dislike.
- On the other hand, there may be people at school or in your neighborhood who pretend to ignore you or show no interest in you. This is often the result of shyness, so take the initiative by smiling and speaking in Japanese. The sooner you start speaking Japanese, the shorter your time as an outsider will be.

8-7 Tattoos and Body Piercing

Tattoos and body/facial piercing is trendy among some young people in big cities like Tokyo and Osaka, but you will rarely see it in other local areas. Tattoos have historically been associated with criminals, gang members, or organized crime (Yakuza), and even today there is a very negative image of tattoos. If you have tattoos, you will be refused entry, or asked to leave, public swimming pools, public or private communal baths, and golf courses. Tattoos and piercing are unacceptable at school. If you have pierced ears or other piercings, you should remove your earrings before you go to school although it is fine wear them when you are at home. Since host schools find tattoos unacceptable, those students who already have tattoos before coming to Japan will need to find some way to cover them, especially before participating in swimming classes or other sports where they may show, at school.

You are not allowed to get a piercing or tattoo during your stay in Japan. Piercing and tattoos are medical procedures that may cause serious complications. Treatment costs will not be covered by AFS Medical Insurance in such cases.

8-8 Sexual Behavior

High school students are considered to be children and so sexual relationships are not acceptable. Sexual activity, or even just dating in some areas of Japan, will cause people in your community to question your character and your suitability to be an exchange program participant, and may cause serious problems for your host family and school. *Engaging in sexual activity will result in your early return.*

9 Health & Hygiene

9-1 What to do when you feel sick

Please tell your host family/host school

teacher/LP IMMEDIATELY when you have the following symptom(s). They will pay your medical and medication costs for you and ask AFS for reimbursement.

- ◆High fever or feeling feverish/a chill.
- ◆Frequent cough.
- ◆Sore throat.
- ◆Headache
- ◆Lack of appetite
- ◆Nasal congestion(runny nose and stuffy nose.
- ◆General body aches such as joint pain.
- ◆Severe diarrhea or vomiting.

Don't hesitate to tell your condition if you feel sick physically or mentally.

9-2 Influenza (Inhuruenza)

Since Japanese winters are cold and very dry and the population density is very high, especially in urban areas, influenza and colds may spread very easily. In addition to dressing warmly and getting enough sleep, taking the following measures may help you get through the winter months without a fever, cough, or stuffy nose.

How to avoid infection

- ◆Wash your hands with soap and gargle when you get home.
- ◆Avoid large crowds of people as much as possible.
- ◆If you are coughing or sneezing, wear a face mask in order to prevent infecting others.
- ◆If you do not have a face mask, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and keep a distance of at least one meter from others. Throw away used tissues in a covered wastebasket immediately.
- ◆Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Vaccination against Influenza

In Japan, seasonal influenza vaccinations start in autumn every year. It takes anywhere from two to three weeks to develop antibodies, and immunity to the flu virus lasts for about six months. If your host family or school recommends that you get vaccinated, please discuss it with your natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s). Since your parent's consent is necessary and you are responsible for the cost,

please inform your LP before going to the doctor. When you go to the doctor, you will be asked about your medical history, including allergies, and so on. Please take Health Certificate 3A & 3B, which your host family is keeping for you.

9-3 Avoid Food Poisoning

Food goes bad quickly in Japan's hot and humid weather and there are many cases of food poisoning between June and September. Infectious gastroenteritis occurs mainly in winter. Follow these tips throughout the year to protect yourself from food poisoning and infectious gastroenteritis.

- Wash your hands thoroughly when you get home.
- Always wash your hands before you eat.
- Be careful of what you eat outside, especially when you are on your own.
- Maintain your physical condition by sleeping well and eating a well-balanced diet.
- If you get a stomachache, diarrhea, or fever, don't hesitate to ask your host family to take you to the doctor.
- Be careful not to come in contact with vomit.

9-4 HIV (Eizu) and Hepatitis B & C

HIV and Hepatitis B and C cases are small in number, but do exist in Japan. Due to strict controls, blood transfusion is not a cause of infection. The major causes of infection are sexual contact, sharing hypodermic syringes (drug users), tattooing needles, and transmission from mother to child. Avoid sharing toothbrushes, razors/shavers, nail clippers, or anything else that could have blood on it. Also avoid passing the bottle/glass/cup around and drinking from it in turn. There

are no reported cases of infection through daily activities such as handshaking, coughing and sneezing, insect bites, pets, or from swimming pools or public or private communal baths.

9-5 Toilet (Toire)

Public facilities (including schools) may have Japanese style toilets, while most homes have western style toilets. To use a



Japanese-style toilet, squat down facing the hooded end. Most public toilets do not

supply toilet paper or towels for drying your hands, so you should carry a handkerchief, a small towel, and a packet of tissues.

Many homes have a Washlet attached to the toilet; please ask your host family how to use it, and which buttons to push. Make sure that you do not leave the toilet seat and floor wet. Also please close the toilet cover.

9-6 For Girls: Menstruation (Seiri)

- How to dispose of napkins.
Don't flush used sanitary pads/tampons, down the toilet because it will block the drain. Usually

there is a container for them in the corner of the toilet. Japanese girls do not wash the used sanitary pads. They will wrap the used sanitary pads/tampons in toilet paper and discard them in the container. Ask your host mother what to do.

- Stained sheets or underwear should be washed separately from other garments in cold water as soon as possible. Wash them yourself; don't ask your host mother to wash them for you.
- Before taking a bath during your period, discuss it with your host mother. She will probably request that you use the bath last.
- Living in a new environment can cause a delay in your menstrual cycle which is usually nothing to worry about. However, if your period stops for more than 3 months, you should tell your natural mother and ask her to contact your Sending National Office if she thinks medical attention is necessary. The medical expenses are covered by the AFS Medical Plan. Also, if you have a particular concern about your physical condition, don't hesitate to bring it up with your host mother or LP.

10 Rules and Guidelines for Your Stay in Japan

You are coming to Japan as an exchange student not as a tourist, so you are expected to try to learn about Japan. AFS has the right to cancel your participation and return you home early if you violate the terms and conditions of the Participation Agreement, develop inappropriate personal behavior, or do things AFS does not think is in the best interests of the participant or AFS.

10-1 AFS International Rules

10-1-1 You MUST abide by the laws of your host country.

AFS participants must abide by the laws of their hosting country. Neither AFS nor the national government of the participant's country of citizenship can protect you from arrest or punishment if you are involved with any illegal substances or any other illegal activities such as smoking, drinking alcohol, shoplifting, theft, driving without a license, and cheating train fares, among other things.

SMOKING & DRINKING under the age of 20 is ILLEGAL in Japan

Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes is illegal for people under 20 in Japan. You may see some teenagers smoking and/or drinking, but that does not mean that you can break the law.

If you smoke or drink, you will be asked to sign the **Support Agreement**. This is used to remind you that you agreed to abide by the laws of your host country by signing the Participation Agreement, and to make sure that you really do understand that you are responsible for abiding by the Japanese laws which cover smoking and the drinking of alcohol by those under 20. The **Support Agreement** warns that *if you fail to follow Japanese laws, you will be sent home early.*

School and smoking & drinking



Naturally, since it is against the law, schools in Japan are very strict about smoking and drinking. If your school catches you smoking or drinking, even outside of school, you will probably be expelled. If you are expelled from your host school for smoking or drinking, you will be sent home early.

Be aware that the **Support Agreement** does not apply to schools.

10-1-2 NO DRIVING cars or other motor powered vehicles.

AFS participants are not allowed to drive cars, motorcycles, motor scooters, motorboats, jet skis, snowmobiles or powered bicycles. The insurance that AFS provides does not cover expenses for damages caused in accidents when an AFS participant is driving.

AFS participants are not allowed to fly in privately licensed aircraft as a passenger without written authorization from your natural parents.



10-1-3 NO ILLEGAL DRUGS (this includes new age drugs)

Do not use, or get involved with any illegal drugs.

Penalties under Japanese law for the use, or possession of, illegal drugs are very severe compared with some other countries, and include imprisonment and, in the case of foreign nationals, deportation.

NOTE

AFS regards "drug involvement" as having drugs or drug paraphernalia (pipes etc.) in your personal possession, going to places where drugs are used, or associating with persons using these substances.

Being involved with illegal drugs will result in an early return.

10-1-4 TRAVELING TO AND FROM Your host country

Travel dates to and from the hosting country are decided by AFS and all participants are expected to follow these dates.

10-1-5 YOU must adhere to the internal travel guidelines of the AFS organization in the host country. Violating the host country travel policies may be cause for an early return to the home country.

AFS Japan Travel Rules

AFS participants are not tourists. In Japan you are not old enough to travel alone. You must abide by the following AFS Japan travel rules; some travel is not permitted in any circumstances.

In Japan "Travel" refers to overnight stays, away from your hosting chapter, as well as day trips in which you travel outside the accustomed sphere of your everyday activities. Please follow the guidance of your hosting chapter regarding the day trip.

● Prohibited travel:

The following travel is not allowed either because it is not safe or because it is not in line with AFS Program purposes.

✧ Hitchhiking.

- ✧ Travel with other AFS participants.
- ✧ Travel with visiting natural family, relatives, or friends.
- ✧ Travel during the first 4 months of your stay (excludes travel with host family).
- ✧ Staying at a hotel, youth hostel, camping site, or a home without an adult (someone who is over 20) supervisor. **[Note 1].**

● **Permitted travel:**

- ✧ Travel with your host family is permitted in principle, but travel where all accompanying host family members are under the age of 20 requires a TW **[Note 2].**
- ✧ School trips such as excursions (Shugaku-ryoko), and class fieldtrips (Ensoku) are permitted, in principle.

● **Independent Travel:**

This is when a participant travels alone or travels with someone who is not a host family member. For independent travel you need a Travel Waiver.

● **Conditions for Travel Permission**

- ✧ AFS compulsory events and school attendance must not be interrupted.
- ✧ The participant's host family and host school must agree.
- ✧ The purpose and timing of the travel, credibility and reliability of the accompanying person(s), safety, source of travel funds, and emergency contact telephone number(s) must all be confirmed in advance.

● **How to Obtain Permission for travel**

- ✧ Present your completed travel plan to your Chapter at least three weeks before you plan to depart for assessment and approval.
- ✧ Get your natural parents to sign a TW through the AFS Japan Office before the trip.

Note 1: Applies when traveling with host family members.

Note 2: What is a "TW" (Independent Travel Waiver)

By signing the TW, the participant's natural parents or guardian agree that during the trip, the AFS participant is not the responsibility of AFS and that they will take full responsibility. However, the participant is still bound by the terms and conditions of the AFS Participation Agreement, and will remain under AFS Medical coverage during the trip (this does not mean that AFS has to provide support to get medical treatment). You need to pay your medical bill up front and ask AFS for reimbursement later with a designated medical report ('AFS Exchange Student Physician's Statement') filled out by your attending physician, and the receipt. Make sure that you bring your National Health Insurance Certificate with you when you travel independently.)

10-1-6 VISITS BY NATURAL FAMILY MEMBERS (INCLUDING RELATIVES) and FRIENDS are discouraged.

If a family member or friend plans to visit the participant, they must obtain consent in advance from the AFS national office in the hosting country and abide by the hosting country regulations. The AFS host country and/or host family, are not required to consent to a visit.



Many years of experience has shown AFS that visits by natural family members (including relatives) and friends during the AFS program have a negative impact on a participant's experience. This is because such visits distract participants from their commitment to a new life, impose extra responsibilities on the host family and the local support structure, and create tension for other students and host families.

If, given this, natural family members (including relatives) or friends still wish to visit you in Japan, they must fulfill the

following requirements.

- Receive official consent from AFS Japan through the AFS office or affiliated organization in your country, at least one month before the visit.
- The visit cannot be in the first 4 months of the participant's stay.
- The visit cannot be at a time when Japanese families traditionally spend time together, such as over the New Year break and during the Obon Festival in mid-August.
- The visit to the local area must not exceed 2 nights and 3 days.
- Staying at the home of the host family is not permitted
- The AFS participant is not permitted to stay overnight with the visiting natural family members (including relatives) or friends, away from the host family.
- The AFS participant is not permitted to go on an overnight trip with the visiting natural family members (including relatives) or friends. This is in accordance with AFS Japan travel rules.
- The visiting natural family members (including relatives) or friends must have overseas travel insurance.

10-1-7 Doing high risk sports and other activities

Participants may take part in sports or activities in which the participant has not previously engaged or which are not available in home country. By signing the Host Country Activity Waiver upon your country assignment, you and your natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s) consent to your participation in the activities or sports in the list below. However, please be aware that your natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may be asked to sign other waivers or release forms giving their

permission and authorization for you to take part in certain activities or school organized sports.

◆AFS Japan Activity List

Please confirm what activities are prohibited by your natural parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and do not engage in these activities during your stay in Japan.

- ✧ Motorized Activities not requiring a license, such as Go-karting in an amusement park
- ✧ Outdoor Activities, such as Biking, Running(10km - full marathon), Mountain Climbing, Roller Skating, Walking in a Rally(50km/day - 70km/overnight)
- ✧ Team and/or School Sports, such as Baseball, Basketball, Rugby, Soccer(football), Volleyball
- ✧ Water Sports such as, Canoeing, Banana Boating, Rafting, Snorkeling, Swimming (pool, river, lake, ocean, long distance such as 2km to 4km in the ocean with an escort boat)
- ✧ Winter Sports, such as Cross-country skiing, Downhill skiing, Ice skating(rink, lake), Sledding, Snowboarding
- ✧ Other Activities, such as Japanese Martial Arts, Taekwondo, Kickboxing

◆If you plan to do the following sports or activities, please inform your LP *THREE WEEKS in advance*. You cannot engage in the following sports or activities without an Activity Waiver. Your LP will tell you if an Activity Waiver is needed to do the sport you want to do. The Activity Waiver must be sent through the AFS office in your home country.

Rollerblading, Roller Boarding, Skateboarding, Scuba Diving (only for license holders), Horseback Riding

◆Prohibited sports/activities

AFS Japan does not approve the following activities.

Flying in privately licensed aircraft/helicopter, Sightseeing flights, Hot-Air Ballooning, Hang-gliding,

Para-gliding, Parasailing, Bungee Jumping, Bobsleigh riding, Skydiving, Professional and amateur racing, participating in professional athletics.

10-2 Additional AFS Japan Rules and Guidelines

● Part-time jobs

The visa that AFS participants receive to come to Japan is not a work permit and so you cannot do any work that requires a work permit. In fact, as an exchange student, your daily life should be centered on your host family and school.

In addition, AFS Japan does not encourage teaching your native language for payment.

AFS Japan may approve private, short-term work arrangements if the host family, host chapter, and host school agree, but the rules and the opinion of the host school comes first, and AFS Japan will respect their position when making the final decision.

● Returning to your home country early for personal reasons

Returning to your home country early for personal reasons is possible if AFS Japan approves an official request from your AFS National Office for academic requirements in your home school system or for non-emergency needs. AFS Japan will make the return travel arrangements to an international airport in Japan and provide a chaperone to help the participant check-in.

Paying the associated expenses

When returning home early for personal reasons, the participant's parents or guardian must pay for the domestic travel expenses, including lodging and meals. All expenses must be paid to AFS Japan through the hosting chapter before the participant leaves Japan.

● Assistance Available to Students in Taking Examinations

If requested by students, AFS Japan may assist them in taking examinations, such as college entrance preparatory exams (ex. SAT, AP Exam, Baccalaureate) and the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, under the following conditions.

1. AFS will make arrangements for a local home stay and chaperon if students cannot do so.
2. Given the scheduling for the SAT, AP Exam and Japanese Proficiency Tests, making a home stay arrangement may be unavoidable. For the Baccalaureate exam, an arrangement can be made for the entire exam period, including the previous night of the first exam date.
3. Chaperons will meet students at the train station/airport in the city where the exam site is located and escort them to the home stay site. Then, on the following morning, they will take students from the home stay to the exam site, and finally from the exam site to the train station/airport to see students off to the home community. AFS Japan will pay for the chaperon's expenses.

Students are responsible for the following.

1. Applying for the exams and making travel arrangements.
2. All expenses except those related to the chaperon's transportation.
3. Asking your local chapter for assistance a month prior to the exam date at the latest.
4. Obtaining prior consent from your host school, if you need to be absent from school or leave school early in order to take the exam.
5. If a home stay outside of your host community is necessary, a Travel Waiver must be processed via your hosting chapter 3 weeks prior to the exams.
6. Going back to the host community by the end of the day once the exam is over, unless there is some unavoidable difficulty in scheduling return travel arrangements for the same day.

- **Accepting Requests for AFS Student's Presentations from Other Organizations**

AFS Japan will collaborate with other organizations in order to promote international understanding in local communities. AFS asks you for your understanding and active participation in such events. When AFS students are asked by other organizations to make presentations (such as making a speech in public), please inform your chapter president or the LP of the request via your host family or host school, and follow their advice.

You may not receive a gratuity or award money directly, even if a presentation is

made at the request of an AFS local chapter. The local chapter will receive it first and will pay to you the actual expenses of participating in the event, such as costs of transportation. The balance will be kept by the local chapter to be allotted to its overall hosting expenses. You may receive a gratuity, in kind.

- **Extend your stay in Japan - NOT allowed**

Due to the amendment in 2012 to the Immigration Control Refugee Recognition Act, you are not allowed to extend your stay in Japan. You must leave Japan on the program end date.

11 Tips for Your Safety in Japan

Most of what you learn while on the AFS program will be what you learn through your everyday interactions and experiences at home, school and in your community. AFS staff and volunteers understand that the opportunity to learn while on the AFS program is great and it is not always easy. You may encounter situations during your stay that you find confusing, frustrating or even a little scary.

In order to help you make it through and learn from these challenging times with the help of host families, local community, your liaison person and school personnel, AFS has created a "Program Support" system for all participants, the purpose of which is to provide a safety net for you; a consistently supportive environment in which you may ask questions, obtain advice and receive help.

Maintaining the safety of the participant is our first priority at AFS, and staying safe should be one of your highest priorities, also. In order to accomplish this, please thoroughly read the handbook "*Tips for Personal Safety in Japan*". AFS Japan has also sent this handbook to your host family, host school, and LP. Make sure that you discuss the contents with your host family, host school, and AFS representatives. Always listen to, and follow, their advice, as they can tell you where the dangerous areas in your hosting community may be and how local people avoid or deal with dangerous situations they may encounter. Please keep in mind that, ultimately, you are the one in the best position to be responsible for maintaining your own safety.

APPENDIX

1. Checklist For The First Day
2. Internet Guidelines
3. AFS Student Travel Plan<旅行計画書>
4. Information about Yourself

CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST DAY

Share this checklist with your host family and learn about their family rules.

ON A DAILY BASIS

1. Otoosan?(Dad) Okaasan?(Mom)
What should I call my host father, mother & other family members?
2. Getting up. What time should I get up on schooldays? What about holidays? May I use an alarm clock?
3. Food. The food I can't eat due to allergies, cultural or religious reasons is.....
4. Breakfast. Who cooks? Do we all eat together? Am I expected to make my own school lunch?
5. Before school. Is there anything I have to do? Make my bed or fold my futon? Open and close the windows of my room?
6. Going to school. Do I go by bus, train, bicycle, or on foot? How long does it take?
7. What time am I expected to be home from school or club activities?
8. How do I get in after school if nobody is home? Will I have a house key?
9. Snacks & drinks. May I help myself to food from the refrigerator/cupboards between meals or do I have to ask host mother?
10. Dinnertime. Who cooks? Does the family eat together? Should I help with cooking dinner and the dishes, etc.?
11. Bath Time. When and how long may



留学生を迎える日のチェックリスト

ホストファミリーの皆様へお願い
留学生を迎える日に、次の事項を一緒にご確認ください。
家庭のルールは、はっきりと伝えてください。

毎日の生活に必要なこと

1. お父さん、お母さん、その他のご家族の呼び方
2. 起床時間：登校日・休日の起床時間、目覚まし時計は借りられるのか
3. 食べ物：アレルギーまたは宗教、文化上、の理由で食べられない物はあるか
4. 朝食：誰が作るのか、家族全員で食べるのか、学校へ持参するお弁当は自分で作るのか、それとも誰かが作ってくれるのか
5. 朝、学校へ行く前にやっておくべきことは何かあるか、布団の片づけ、窓の開け閉め
6. 学校への通学方法：バス・電車・自転車・徒歩など
7. 門限はあるか
8. 家の鍵：学校から帰って誰もいない時、どうやって家の中に入ったらよいか、家の鍵は（貸して）もらえるのか
9. スナックや飲み物：食間に冷蔵庫や戸棚にあるものを自由に食べたり飲んだりしてもよいのか、それともお母さんに聞かないとダメなのか
10. 夕食時間：誰が作るのか、家族全員で食べるのか、夕食作りや後片付けを手伝ったらよいか
11. 入浴時間：いつ、どのくらいの時間お風呂に入ったり、シャワーが使える



I spend when I bathe/shower? Is there an order in which family members bathe?

12. What time do you expect me to go to bed (weekdays/weekend)?

OTHER ISSUES

13. What are the rules for making long distance phone calls? Should I ask for each phone call (local & long distance)? Am I to pay for each call?

14. What are the rules regarding internet usage including Skype? Should I ask first? How about frequency, time of day, how long and how to pay? What should I know about internet safety, protecting my privacy and that of the family?

15. What chores am I expected to do daily? (e.g. tidying my room/bathroom, common space, Setting/clearing the table, Washing & drying the dishes, Putting out the garbage, Walking the dog)

16. Are there any chores that I will share with my family? (e.g. vacuuming, shopping, taking laundry, house, sweeping the street in front of the house, etc.)



17. What should I do when a phone rings or someone rings the doorbell when I am alone?

Take a walk around the house together...

- ☆ *My room*: Which closet, wardrobe, drawers, desk can I use? Can I eat snacks in my room? What should I do with the rubbish/dirty dishes?

- ☆ *Bathroom & toilet*: Do I know how to use them? Where should I keep my toothbrush, face towels, bath

のか、入浴する順番はあるか

12. 就寝時間：平日・週末の就寝時間

その他で確認しておくべきこと

13. 電話をかけるとき：使用する度に断ったほうがよいか、電話代は毎回はらうのか

14. コンピュータの使用

(スカイプを含む)：

使用する度に断ったほうがよいか、使用頻度、時間、長さ、費用の負担はどうするか、どうしたらインターネットの安全性や自分や家族のプライバシーを守れるか

15. 毎日お手伝いすることはあるか、例：自分の部屋や浴室や共有スペースの整理整頓、お皿を並べたり、食後の片づけ、皿洗いと皿拭き、ゴミ出し、犬の散歩など

16. 家族と共有する家事：

掃除機がけ、買い物、洗濯物

の取り込み、家の前の通りを掃



17. 家族が留守の際の電話・訪問への対応

家の中を案内しながらご説明ください

- ☆ AFS 生の部屋で：クローゼット・箆箆・

引出し・机などはどれを使ったらよいか、

部屋でスナックなどを食べてもよいか、ゴミ

はいつどのように捨てたらよいか

- ☆ 風呂場・トイレで：トイレ、シャワー、浴槽

の使い方、ジェットバスの使い方、温水の

出し方、歯ブラシ・タオル・シャンプーの

置き場所、(女子生徒の場合) 生理用品の

towels & shampoo? (Girls, how/where do I throw away feminine hygiene products?) How should I leave the bathroom & toilet after I am finished (door open or closed, fan, lights, heater off/on, toilet lid down or up, etc)?

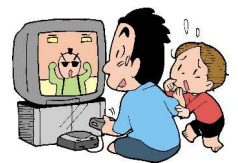
- ☆ *Kitchen & dining room:* Where do I sit? Which dishes etc. can I use? Can I sometimes cook for myself? Can I freely use the fridge, microwave, gas range and oven?
- ☆ *Front door:* How do I unlock & lock the door. Where do I take off my shoes? Where do I keep my shoes after taking them off?
- ☆ *Living room:* Am I allowed to freely use the TV, piano, CD player, DVD player, etc.? Am I expected to spend time with my host family in the living room after dinner?
- ☆ *Laundry Room:* Do I wash my clothes myself? What about my underthings? How & when can I do my laundry? How do I use the washing machine? Where is the detergent?
- ☆ *Is there any room that I am not allowed to enter?*

IMMEDIATE TASKS

1. When will I first visit my school?
2. When will I register my residence and apply for National Health Insurance at the local city office?
3. Where can I withdraw money with my debit or credit card?

置き場所・始末の仕方、お風呂やトイレを使った時は(ドアを開けたままにするのか、閉めるのか、換気扇、電気、ヒーターは消すのかつけたままにするのか、便器の蓋を閉めるのかなど

- ☆ 台所・ダイニングルームで: どこに座ったらよいか、お皿やコップはどれを使うのか、たまには自分で料理してもよいか、冷蔵庫や電子レンジ、ガスレンジ、オーブンなどは自由に使ってもよいのか
- ☆ 玄関で: ドアの開け方・閉め方、靴の脱ぎ場所・置き場所
- ☆ 居間で: テレビ・ピアノ・CD プレイヤー・DVD プレイヤーなどは自由に使ってもよいのか、夕食後は居間でホストファミリーと(一緒に)過ごすのか
- ☆ 洗濯場所: 自分で洗濯するのか、下着はどうするのか、いつ、どのように洗濯したらよいのか、洗濯機はどのように使うのか、洗剤はどこか
- ☆ 特に留学生が入ってはいけない部屋はあるか



すぐやるべきこと

1. 学校訪問はいつですか
2. 住民登録と国民健康保険加入の手続きはいつですか
3. ATM の場所の確認

Internet Guidelines

A) Staying in Touch with Friends & Family Back Home

While you are on exchange, hearing news and sharing the experience is important. Periods of loneliness are common, and during those times communication from home may seem like the best medicine, but actually it isn't!

Homesickness is a common problem for participants if they and/or their families and friends communicate often. Below are some guidelines to help you establish effective communication during the exchange period so that your process of getting used to your host country can go smoothly.

1) Telephone Contact While on the Exchange Program

During telephone calls you are powerfully reminded of your home culture, language, customs, and home activities at a time when you might be feeling weak or alone in an unfamiliar place. The sound of a loved one's voice can make you feel sad, for hours or days, when you are constantly reminded of the distance and the differences which you face. This sadness adds to the difficulties of adjusting to your new location, and can make it difficult to concentrate on this task.

AFS recommends that you and your natural family decide how often you will communicate with each other, before the exchange takes place. It is ideal to keep in touch less than weekly by mail or e-mail and to make calls (including SKYPE) only on special occasions, such as birthdays or special holidays. The next

best choice would be to use a phone call, no more than once a month, of about 15 minutes in length. Calling more often has been found to cause problems in adjusting to a new culture.

2) Mobile Phones

Remember that it is very expensive to use your mobile phone with international roaming in Japan, since each local call becomes an international call. More importantly, spending too much time on your mobile phone, (as with a regular phone) can slow down your successful adjustment to Japan.

Keep to a budget and remember to use good mobile phone manners.

1. Plan and follow a budget for your mobile phone use carefully. Don't trouble your host family over phone expenses. Clear up any outstanding phone expenses before returning home.
2. Have good mobile phone manners.
 - (a) Follow host school rules about taking your phone to school.
 - (b) Bringing your phone to the dinner table is impolite.
 - (c) While relaxing with your host family, give them your full attention.
 - (d) Set your mobile phone to vibration or silent mode while on public transportation.
 - (e) Be sensible and do not use your mobile phone while walking.
 - (f) Using your mobile phone while biking is strictly prohibited by law.
3. Learn to use the Natural Disaster Messaging System.
4. Internet adult sites such as dating sites are off limits.

3) E-Mail, Online Chat and Social Networking Sites

Remember that each host family's access to, and ideas about, the Internet may be different. Be sure to ask your host family whether you can bring your computer or use their computer. In case you receive permission from your host family to bring your own computer to Japan, be sure and keep your anti-virus software up-to-date at all times. If you receive the OK from them on computer use, be sure to discuss their expectations concerning how often, how long, what time of day, and where you can use the computer. Also, talk about what the payment responsibilities are.

Follow the rules they set, and remember that AFS will place priority on your lifestyle with your host family, and may take custody of your computer if you break the rules. If you use the computer of your host family, be sure to delete everything you download when you leave Japan.

Although often viewed as a substitute for postal mail, e-mail is much quicker, and in host countries and families where e-mail is common, participants may have difficulty deciding how much e-mailing is too much. As with the telephone calls back home, participants can communicate in their native language. If students e-mail and chat with their home country friends too often, it will slow down the participant's adjustment to his or her host country, in the same way that using the telephone does. Naturally, Internet telephone networks, such as Skype, have the same weakness as both e-mail and the telephone. AFS suggests that, ideally, participants send a

general e-mail to family and friends once a week or less, making it more similar to a letter. AFS Japan recommends spending no more than one hour, each day, in front of your PC.

4) The Host Family's Point of View

Spending too much time communicating with family and friends in your home country will have a negative impact, not only on you, but on your host family as well. For you, it can slow down your adaptation to "life as a Japanese teenager," since it allows you to turn to friends and family members "back home" instead of finding new friends, building relationships with host family members and getting used to a new country. In addition, your spending a lot of time on e-mail, in chat rooms, and on social networking sites, sends a potentially negative message to your host family. That message may be hurtful to them and harm your relationship with them. Your host family may feel that these activities are a rejection of their family, and their family's efforts to welcome you into their home, even if you do not mean to give them this message. It can also make them feel like they may not be doing enough to help you. They may begin to worry whether they made the right choice in hosting you.

If you find you are having trouble limiting your communication with friends and family in your home country or it seems that they are contacting you too often, discuss the problem with your host parents and/or liaison person. They can help you make a plan for controlling your communication that will satisfy you, your natural family, AND your host family.

B) Internet use

1) The Web & Social Networking: Ensure Your Safety

There are many resources on the Internet to advise you on how you can try to stay safe in cyberspace. We recommend that you take the time to find information regarding cyber safety, and also that you continually look at your own online activities to make certain that you are putting safety before socialization at all times! The following are some sites that you may want to explore:

<http://teens.webmd.com/features/teen-internet-safety-tips>

<http://www.kokoro-tokyo.jp/guidebook>

2) Guidelines for Internet Use

Given the realities previously mentioned, you are responsible for making sure that your Internet use is consistent with the following AFS Japan guidelines

The internet is a media where people who are strangers to each other participate in public communication, so it is necessary for everyone to have the courtesy and consideration not to do anything which will make others feel uncomfortable or offended. When posting your exchange student experiences on a forum such as a homepage, blog, YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter, it is necessary to have the mutual agreement of both the student and the host family about the content of the posting. Also, when posting on any Internet bulletin boards, please behave sensibly and courteously.

When using the internet, follow these four rules:

1. Do not post any personal information, such as your name, address, host school, and other information, which may identify you or your host family.
2. Pay careful attention when posting photographs or video images. Receive permission from all people appearing in the images before posting them.
3. Do not post any material whose contents may be illegal, violate AFS rules, violate host school rules or that may put yourself or others at risk.
4. Do not post anything which is untruthful about your host family, host school, or AFS or that violates someone's privacy or good name. Also, do not express ideas or use "four-letter-words" which may hurt people's dignity or which unjustifiably attack another person.

In the event that you post untrue material that harms AFS operations or which causes AFS to lose trust, you will be asked by AFS about the details of the content and AFS may have the post removed from the site.

If you have any questions or opinions concerning AFS, you should contact AFS Japan to express yourself directly instead of using an Internet forum.

Approval: We highly recommend that participants who create their own websites, or who post material on websites created by others, discuss the content beforehand with their host family and liaison person to make sure that the material is suitable and follows these guidelines.

Disclaimer: Any website maintained by a participant during his or her AFS Japan program must make clear the fact that it is not an official publication of AFS Japan. The site must be labeled clearly and boldly with an appropriate disclaimer such as: "The contents of this website are mine personally and do not reflect any position of AFS Japan."

Use of the AFS Japan Logo: Because the use of the AFS Japan logo is reserved for official activities authorized by AFS Japan, the logo cannot be used on participant websites.

Cultural Sensitivity: The thoughtful opinions that participants express in their communications with others can help in bringing to the world a better understanding of other countries. However, since many people can access participant-posted material on the Internet, both in their hosted-country and elsewhere, participants should remember to be culturally sensitive about the material they post to any website. Participants should be reminded that people in general may make assumptions about AFS Japan or the participant's community based on the material a participant posts to a website. Although we encourage participants to express themselves freely, please remember that participant-posted material on the Internet should make an effort not to reflect poorly on AFS Japan, the host family, the host school, or the home country.

Safety and Security: As a safety precaution, participants are urged not to post details about where they or other participants live or are located, or information about events to be attended by a large number of participants, such as orientations or parties. For example, participants who live in small towns or rural

areas should not post the name of their community or town on their website, but should only refer to the general area of the country (Kanto, Kyushu, etc.) where they live.

For your own and others protection, it is also advisable not to provide information about participants' personal possessions.

Publication Policies: As with the AFS policy concerning employment, participants may not accept money for anything that they write or photographs that appear on the web.

Participants should be advised that posting materials to the web that they have not written or created may violate Japanese copyright laws.

3) Reminders of Practical Tips for Internet Use

1. **Install any software ONLY with your host family's permission.**
2. **Do not install or use any file sharing programs.**
3. **Do not illegally download software or music.**

There are software programs and games that the developer allows to be given away for free (gratis), but these should come from the original developers so that you know that they allow it.

4. **Ignore any attachments you are not expecting.**
5. **Maintain a firewall on your computer.**
6. **Ignore links in an email from someone you don't know.**
7. **Avoid putting your email address on a website or blog.** (You will get spam.)
8. **Ignore spam, even to take yourself off the mailing list.** (You may get more spam.)
9. **Ignore email requests that suggest you**

should forward the e-mail to your friends.

4) Pornography

Adult as well as child pornography is available on the Internet on a voluntary basis (accessible through search programs) and on an involuntary basis (coming on a screen under a name not usually connected with such material). In addition to the possible serious legal consequences, participants should understand the negative effect accessing such sites would have on his or her relationship with his or her host family. Because of these very serious consequences, if any participant accesses adult or child pornography on the Internet he or she may be terminated from the program and returned home early.

. If you open or click on a file and pornographic material appears, you must immediately tell your host family and the local AFS Volunteers so that they understand that you did not access the site deliberately, and so that they may report these illegal sites.

(References: Welcome to the USA written by AFS-USA, and Internet guidelines provided by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police)

AFS Student Travel Plan <旅行計画書>
(Please complete this form in English)

Name :

<生徒名> _____

Country :

<派遣国> _____

Purpose of the Trip :

<趣旨> _____

Name of Accompanying Persons :

<同伴者名> _____

Your Relationship :

<留学生との関係> _____

Who Is Paying for the Trip? :

<旅費の負担者> _____

Date 年月日	Itinerary /Means of Transportation 旅程／交通手段	Place to Stay/Contact Number 滞在先住所氏名／緊急連絡先

Signature :

<署名> _____

Date :

<日付> _____

〈署名〉 _____

〈日付〉 _____

Information about yourself

Full Name		Country	
Passport No.		Date of Expiration	
Visa No.		Date of Expiration	

Your height etc.

Height		cm	Weight		Kg
Shoe Size		cm	Normal Body Temperature		°C
Blood Type	A B O AB (Rh+) (Rh-)				

Your Host Family

Name			
Address			
Telephone		E-mail	
Fax			

Your Chapter

Chapter Name			
Chapter President	Name Address Contact Number		
Liaison Person(LP)	Name Address Contact Number		

Host School

Name of School	
Address	
Phone/Fax	

Your Embassy in Japan

Address	
Phone/Fax/Mail	

Emergency Phone Numbers

AFS Japan Office	National Office Work Hours: 03-6206-1911 After Work Hours, Weekends, Holidays: 090-4540-5180		
Police (Foreign Languages OK)	110	Fire & Ambulance(Speak Japanese)	119

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