

Host School FAQ – Norway

When does the school year begin and end?

The school year in Norway runs from late August to mid-June. The Christmas holiday from mid-December to early January divides the Norwegian school year into two terms.

What is a typical school day?

Students usually have seven periods a day, and go to school 5 days a week in Norway. Most of the schools start around 8 or 9 am and end about 3 pm, depending on the breaks during the day. There is normally a break of 10 minutes between each period, as well as a longer lunch break around noon. Schools do not provide lunch, so students often eat sandwiches brought from home in their lunch break.

Each class averages 25 – 30 students. Usually students have homework to prepare for every school day, and the Norwegian school system is based on a lot of independent work and group projects. Exams in main subjects last an entire school day, while smaller tests will also be given occasionally. All AFS students must attend school at least 25 hours per week due to your residence permit.

In what type of school will I be enrolled?

AFS students are placed in Norwegian Upper Secondary schools with grades 11 through 13. These schools offer various areas of study. Most AFSers are placed in the “general studies” area, which consists of 2 lines; “Languages, social studies and economy” and “Science”. Some students are also placed in lines that emphasize Music/Dance/Drama, Media and communications, Arts or Sports.

In what grade level will I be enrolled?

Most of you will be enrolled in the 2nd year of Upper Secondary school. If you are 16 upon arrival you might be placed in the 1st year. Students are normally not placed in the 3rd and final year, as a lot of time is used to prepare for final exams, preparing for university and other related activities.

Can I choose my classes? What classes are available?

Classes will vary depending on the school and area of study in which you are placed. We will apply for a school based on the availability in your hosting community, as well as the Host Family's recommendations.

Most classes are obligatory, but you might have some choices when it comes to subjects. Many schools arrange meetings with exchange students on the first day of school, so that you can figure out the best schedule together. Here you can talk with the school about which classes you are interested in taking. Please note that not all subjects will be available for you, but the following classes are most often obligatory

for all students: Norwegian, physical education (P.E.), geography, mathematics, history, social science, religion and ethics, and finally a 3rd language (often Spanish or German).

In what language will these classes be taught?

All classes are taught in Norwegian, except English (taught in English).

Will I need to buy a uniform, books and other supplies?

Norwegian schools do not have uniforms. The schools will provide any books that are needed. All Upper Secondary schools today demand that students have a laptop at their disposal. You will be able to rent a laptop from your school; AFS Norway will cover this expense. You might also be able to use your own laptop if you have one, but this you must check with your school. You are expected to pay yourself for notebooks, pencils, etc.

Are extra-curricular activities available?

Norwegian schools do not usually offer extra-curricular activities, but many Norwegian students take part in sports, drama, choir, marching bands and other activities in their spare time. We encourage you to ask your school mates and host family about what activities are available in their community, and sign up for at least one!

Are High School graduates accepted?

Yes, AFS Norway accepts graduates. All graduates should have been asked to sign an "Academic commitment" sent to you by AFS in your home country. Even if you should be a graduate, it's very important to remember that you are still expected to show up in all classes, participate and do your best, the whole year through.

Can I get an official transcript or a certificate of attendance?

Official transcripts and/or certificates MAY be available, but it depends on the school as well as yourself as a student and how hard you work. Please note that we cannot guarantee such documents. If you need formal documentation from your Norwegian school, make sure to talk with your school counselor/head teacher early in the school year.