

France Host School FAQ

When does the school year begin and end?

The school year in France officially runs from the first week of September and ends in late June. French schools have three trimesters. Depending on high school, juniors and sophomores may not attend school in June, if exams for seniors take place at that time. There are 4 breaks during the school year : Vacances de la Toussaint (10 days off towards the end of October), Vacances de Noël (2 weeks in December), Vacances d'hiver (2 weeks towards the end of February), and Vacance de Printemps/Pâques (2 weeks towards the beginning of April).

What is a typical school day? How many classes per day?

Students usually have eight periods a day and go to school 6 days a week in France – Monday -Saturday. Most of the schools start around 8:15 AM and end around 5:00-6:00 PM depending on breaks during the day. There are usually three breaks during the day, a morning break of 15 minutes, a longer one at lunch time (students eat in the canteen, as every high school usually has one) and a shorter afternoon break. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, students on have class in the morning and finish at lunch time. At the beginning of the year, the students are assigned within a group of about 30. This group (la classe) is given a number or a letter, and they remain together all year long (they have the same teachers, the same schedule etc...). Each subject is taught by a different teacher in a different classroom. Students have a 5 minute period between each class to move to the correct classroom.

In what grade level will I be enrolled?

AFS students are normally enrolled in "premiere" (junior year). Sometimes enrollment also takes place in "terminale" (senior year). Grade placement depends upon the student's age, French skills, and school availability.

Can I choose my classes? What classes are available?

AFS students cannot choose their classes. They have the same timetable as the other students in their class. French schools have one classroom only (made up of about 30-35 students) in which students stay during the whole year and during every class (which they do not choose). The time table is form a week at a time. Every day is different and every week is the same during the whole school year. AFS France applies for a school according to the school experience indicated in a student's application and according to what the host family recommends as a choice of school. Exchange students may be placed in one of three specialties: Economics, Literature, or Sciences. All students take French, history, geography, sports, and two foreign languages, plus subjects related to their particular specialty.

In what language will classes be taught?

With the exception of foreign languages, classes are taught in French. Some foreign languages are taught in that language, while others are usually taught in French (English, Spanish, and German in particular).

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

No uniforms are required, except in private schools. Books are loaned to students during their stay and other school supplies are provided as needed.

Are extra-curricular activities available?

It is not common for French schools to have extra-curricular activities. Schools are for study only. Schools do not have a mascot, no sports clubs, no choir, no music groups, etc. Students who play sports or participate in other extracurricular activities usually play in clubs in their communities or near the school.

Are high school graduates accepted?

Maybe. Keep in mind: graduates must be recent grads (less than three months since high school graduation), they must still be within the program age ranges, they must demonstrate that they understand they will be expected to participate fully in school, and they must understand that they may be placed in school with students younger than them.

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

Transcripts or Certificates cannot be guaranteed, but are possible.

Can I get academic credit for my study abroad?

Maybe, but we can't guarantee it. The amount and type of credit you receive is determined by your high school in the home country so it's important that you talk with your teachers and guidance counselor before you depart to see what is needed in order to be granted credit. In most cases, AFS students have received language, history, or social studies credits. Be sure to keep a copy of any formal grades or transcripts you receive from your host school. It is your responsibility to obtain any written information about your attendance and grades in your host school before you return home. AFS cannot assist you with course or grade information after you complete the program.