

Russia Host School FAQ

When does the school year begin and end?

School starts on September 1 and runs through the end of May, with June being exam month.

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

School usually runs from 8:30am to 2:00pm Monday through Friday. Some schools run through Saturday. Students are expected to take 15-20 lessons per week. Classroom work often means reciting and being tested in written form or orally by the teacher and sometimes being evaluated by the teacher in front of the class. Criticism by the teacher in front of the class is frequent and accepted. Students from 1st through 11th grade are all in one building, so 7 year-olds and 16 year-olds pass each other between classes, creating a substantially different atmosphere than what exchange students are probably used to.

In what type of school will I be enrolled?

All AFS students are enrolled in state schools.

In what grade level will I be enrolled?

Most AFS students are placed in the 10th grade and may be with Russian students a year or two younger than them. If students do not have a strong background in Russian, they may be placed with very young children at the beginning of the school year while they learn Cyrillic.

Will I be able to choose my classes? What classes are available?

Subjects studied include Russian, algebra, literature, geometry, history, foreign languages, politics, psychology, biology, physics, chemistry, astronomy and physical education. All subjects are mandatory, and there are no electives, though exceptions can be made for exchange students. In some schools, AFSers will have some choices in classes, but in other schools, they will be expected to take the standard class schedule.

In what language will the classes be taught?

All instruction, with the exception of foreign languages, is done in Russian.

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

Only some schools have uniforms. If the school a student will be attending requires a uniform, it will be indicated in his/her school placement papers. The cost will be around \$100. AFS Russia will provide students with textbooks and other materials for learning Russian. Students will have access to other books through their school library.

Are extra-curricular activities available?

Schools sometimes offer extracurricular opportunities in music—students can take dance, voice and instrumental lessons—as well as in sports.

Are high school graduates accepted?

Yes. 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?

AFSers should be able to receive a certificate of attendance and an informal evaluation from their school. In some cases, schools can also provide an official transcript on request. If AFSers require an official transcript, they should be sure to ask their host school.

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.