

INTRODUCTION

AFS structures are changing over time. Some volunteers are part of traditional Chapters with formal structures in line with the AFS Constitution. Other volunteers are grouped more informally in an AFS Community where the structure is less formal and roles less defined. However in both situations it is useful to have one person who takes a leadership or co-ordinating role.

The term “Chapter” and “President” in this document refers to either of the above structures.

Thank you for deciding to take on the role of President for your AFS Chapter. Presidents are vital in ensuring that Chapters function efficiently and effectively. Your work is greatly appreciated by AFS Intercultural Programmes New Zealand.

TRAINING

AFS NZL provides training and support in many ways for its volunteers and people who assume key tasks and leadership positions within AFS, this handbook is one of them. This will provide you with an overview of the procedures and responsibilities, which arise in coordinating the affairs of a Chapter.

Information about our structure, mission, vision, volunteers’ rights and obligations, as well as practical information on how to volunteer for AFS in each specific task is available through our online learning. To access this resource please contact our Organisational Developer Carla Rey Vasquez on carla.reyvasquez@afs.org.

CHAPTERS AND COMMUNITIES

The tasks that need to be addressed within a Chapter are:

- Actively work towards finding host families.
- Actively promote AFS to potential sending students.
- Support students and families through activities, events, and individual support people.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure AFS stakeholders (e.g. participants / participant families) receive a high quality, focused service.

- Provide services to AFS participants, host families, sending families, and Volunteers.
- Ensure that responsibilities to **National Office** are met.
- Ensure quality standards are met.
- Recruit, mentor and supervise Volunteers.
- Recruit, screen, and orient host families.
- Ensure that host student orientation takes place.
- Ensure all Volunteers are aware of and adhere to the **AFS NZL Policies and the AFS NZL Code of Conduct**.
- Lead all meetings, or arrange a substitute.
- Write an Annual Report for the Annual General Meeting and send a copy to AFS **National Office (this does not apply to Communities)**.

- Ensure that member records are accurate and if any changes take place inform National Office (Potentially secretary role).
- Ensure that minutes are kept (Potentially secretary role – see Appendix)
- Ensure up to date handbooks, resources, AFS Calendar and AFS Alert, are available on the AFS NZL website
- Ensure proper accounts are kept and provided annually to National Office.
- Communicate regularly with committee members.
- Report committee decisions to other Chapter members.
- Ensure that all AFS publications and communications are distributed to the appropriate people (Potentially secretary role).
- Arrange or oversee events and activities that promote AFS NZL.
- Represent the Chapter at official functions, community events and National functions (e.g. AFS National Conference).

MUST DO'S FOR CHAPTERS (NOT COMMUNITIES)

REPORT TO NATIONAL OFFICE

Annual Accounts: The AFS NZL financial year ends on 31 December. The Chapter must send to the Finance Manager at National Office, a copy of its financial accounts (unaudited) for each year by the 31 January of the year following e.g. Accounts for year ending 31 December 2012 are due to National office by 31 January 2013.

Annual Report: The President must send a copy of the Chapters/ Presidents Annual Report to the National Director at National Office no later than 31st March. Statistics are important for future reference. The report should include an overview of Chapter activities in the past year.

Committee Lists: A full list of all committee members and role holders, with contact details must be sent to the National Office by 31st March each year along with the Annual Report. These details will be entered into Global Link, the Volunteer database.

HOLD A CHAPTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Prior to the Annual General Meeting:

- Determine what positions are falling vacant and look to fill these
- Discuss with the committee possible people to approach for various positions.
- Establish that committee members are given training, handbooks or resource kits outlining roles and responsibilities, ensure you have up-to date material available.
- Arrange mentoring for new position holders, role shadowing, sharing etc.
- Identify information sharing and confidentiality protocols between the Support Coordinator and the President.
- Encourage new role holders to attend national training events, or seek training possibilities within your region.

The Chapter AGM is to be held no later than 8 March, to allow time for new role-holders to be in place well before the National Conference in April/May. Notification to all Chapter members must be given a minimum of 14 days before the AGM. Arrange for a

copy of the Annual Report and the annual accounts to be provided to all Chapter members.

At the AGM the Annual Report is followed by:

- Financial Report
- Election of Chapter officers
- General business
- Speaker/s

ATTEND NATIONAL CONFERENCE / AGM (MEETING OF THE COUNCIL)

The National Conference/AGM is the annual gathering of volunteers and is organised by both National Office and a team of local volunteers. It includes the AFS National Councils Annual General Meeting of AFS NZL (organised by the Board Chair and National Director) and the election of members of the governing Board.

The rules regarding meeting of the Society, Chapter delegates, voting authorities remits and Board elections are covered in the AFS NZL Constitution on the AFS website <http://www.afs.org.nz/Volunteering/volunteer-resources/>

Chapters organise and fund their own travel and attendance costs. There is a formula for equalising travel costs for one participant per Chapter so each Chapter pays the same travel amount *to send one attendee*. This information can be found in the Treasurers Handbook.

MANAGE ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Ensure that accurate minutes of meetings are kept. A separate role of "Minutes Secretary" can be created to carry out this task; this may be a good role for a recent Returnee, less active Volunteer, or for succession purposes. In the past, chapter minutes and Presidents annual reports have been used to trace the history of AFS in New Zealand so they may also serve an archival purpose.

Taking Minutes

Accurate minutes are generally the Secretary's responsibility.

- Begin with the date, including the year. State where the committee meeting was held.
- List those present and the apologies.
- List the accounts and amounts approved for payment.
- Record the main issues and decisions made. Always ask for clarification during the meeting if unsure about what has been decided. Ask "Exactly what would you like me to minute about that?" or read out what you have written, and ask if the meeting agrees that it is correct. Sometimes, when discussion is unstructured, it is appropriate to record "there was general discussion".
- List things people have been asked to do as Action Items e.g.: Action: Jim Smith will book the hall for... (Always include surnames).

Write up the minutes as soon as possible.

This may be done on a laptop as the meeting proceeds or soon afterwards from paper based notes. When writing up the minutes, make a list of all things recommended to look at later in the year, or for the following year. It is easy to forget small but important things that crop up during the very busy AFS year, and a new secretary and committee would

not necessarily know about them. Such items might be the amount spent on farewell gifts, or recommended dates to have host families meet together. The minutes should be emailed or distributed as soon as possible after the meeting, to ensure things are followed up.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENTS TO THINK ABOUT

Annual Strategic Planning: What are your Chapter's goals and objectives for the coming year? What strategies can you put in place to meet these goals? Do your Chapter goals support the AFS NZL goals?

Schools: What schools are in the Chapter's area? Do you have a good relationship with all schools in the area, including pre-schools through to Tertiary level? Is there regular contact with them? Are schools thanked for their support?

Volunteering: Where is your Chapter active volunteers and host families drawn from? How might you increase your members?

Returnees: Are recent Returnees and not so recent Returnees given a voice in the Chapter? How can the Chapter utilise their knowledge and experience? Do you actively retain your Returnees? If your Returnees move on to another city, are they encouraged to maintain involvement with AFS? Do you share their contact details with their new Chapter and AFS National Office?

Meetings: When are Chapter meetings held? What form do they take? Are activities planned to encourage the involvement of hosting/sending parents, hosting / sending students? Are they fun?

AFS News: Do all active volunteers and chapter members receive AFS News?

AFS Resources: www.afs.org.nz Do all your Chapter members know about the website? Resources, handbooks, policies, staff contacts, and other information is available on the AFS website – www.afs.org.nz under "Volunteer Resources". If you are prompted to put in a login the details are:

Login: afs

Password: afs

You can also contact National Office via the Volunteer toll free line:
0800 600 300 or call 04 494 6020

Publicity: How are news about your students away overseas and those hosted in your area conveyed? Is there a story for your local newspaper or radio station?