

Brazil Host School FAQ

When does the school year begin and end?

The school year runs from February to December, with a two- to three-week winter vacation in July.

In what type of school will I be enrolled?

Brazil has both public and private schools. AFSers can be placed in either kind of high school in the equivalent of second-to-last year with classmates ages 15 to 17 years old.

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

Students may attend school either in the morning (from 7am to 12am) or in the afternoon (from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm), Monday through Friday. Students usually take about 5-6 classes per day, each about 50 minutes long. There is usually a 30 minute break in the middle of the day. Students do not usually eat lunch at school.

In what grade level will I be enrolled?

AFS students are usually placed in the second to last or last year of high school (called Middle School Education in Brazil) with students ages 15 to 17.

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

The Brazilian academic system is organized so that students have the same classmates through whole school year. Students cannot choose their class schedule. A student's schedule usually includes the following subjects: Portuguese, Brazilian Literature, Mathematics, Geography, History, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, one foreign language (English, French or Spanish), Physical Education and Civics. Few schools offer electives such as arts, photography, computer science, etc.

In what language will classes be taught?

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

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

AFS Brazil provides AFSers with any textbooks they need for school. These books belong to AFS and should be given back at the end of the school year. Students will need to buy school supplies like notebooks, pens, etc. If the host school requires a uniform, the student will have to pay for it. Uniforms consist of jeans, tennis shoes and a school T-shirt (sold in Brazil for approximately US \$15).

Are extra-curricular activities available such as sports, music, or art?

There are few or no clubs, social events, or extra-curricular activities in Brazilian schools. Many schools do not even have school sports teams. Many students take part in extra-curriculars outside of school.

Students usually take part in such activities before or after school (depending on if they attend the morning session or the afternoon session.) Many students in Brazil spend large parts of their outside school time doing homework. It is also common for students to take language classes after school at private language institutes. The same holds true for students who want to study music, arts, dance, etc.

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 range, they must demonstrate that they understand they will be expected to participate fully in school, and that they may be placed in school with students younger than them.

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

Some host schools may be able to provide grades, but most of them will only provide a certificate of attendance.

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.