

Germany Host School FAQ

When does the school year begin and end?

School generally starts in August or September and ends in mid-June or early August.

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

Students usually go to school Monday through Friday. The daily schedule varies somewhat from school to school. In general, school starts between 7:30am and 8:30am and ends either around 1:00pm or around 5:00pm. Usually a class of about 30 students stays together all day. One class lasts about 45 minutes, so there are usually six classes in the morning and four more in the afternoon.

In what type of school will I be enrolled?

Most AFSers are placed in one of three types of school in Germany: Realschule, leading up to tenth grade, Gymnasium, college preparatory, and Gesamtschule, comprehensive school.

In what grade level will I be enrolled?

Usually students are enrolled in grade 10 or 11. Schools decide what grade students will be enrolled in based on age, German language skills, and availability. A placement in a certain grade cannot be guaranteed.

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

Required courses include German, English, mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, history, social studies, art, music, geography, religion or philosophy, and physical education. Courses call for independent, in-depth study and research. AFS Germany expects students to take part in the set curriculum of the attended class, including at least one German class. Some AFSers take German in Lower classes (sixth or seventh) because German grammar is explained there.

In what language will classes be taught?

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

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

There is no school uniform in Germany. Depending on the federal state regulations, students may be required to purchase school books, but the costs will be covered by AFS Germany as long as students leave the book with the local chapter at the end of the exchange. Some states give out school books for free (which have to be returned after the year). Students will need to purchase school supplies like pens, makers, erasers, calculators, and dictionaries.

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

There are few or no social clubs or events in German schools, sometimes not even school sports teams. Students have to find most of their afternoon activities outside of school with other students or sports clubs.

Many schools organize one school trip during the year. If students choose to participate, they should bring sufficient funds (approximately €350) to cover the expense of this event.

Are high school graduates accepted?

Students already enrolled in university can't be accepted. AFS Germany prefers no graduated students. If students are graduated and have not started university, an Academic Commitment form is needed along with the application. 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?

If students need a certificate of attendance, they can receive one from their school. A transcript of grades can be issued depending on whether or not students pass certain exams, but it cannot be guaranteed.

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.