

Italy Host School FAQ

When does the school year begin and end?

The school year runs from mid-September to mid-June, with two weeks off at Christmas, one week off at Easter, and a few other one or two-day national or local holidays spread throughout the school year.

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

Students in Italy attend school Monday-Saturday, from about 8:30am to 1:30pm. There are about five classes per day, with one 15-30 minute break in the middle of the day. Lunch is not served in school. During the school day, students stay in the same classroom, while teachers move from class to class. Students have daily homework. Evaluations made by teachers include written and oral tests, typically once a month on each subject. Written tests rarely have multiple choices.

In what type of school will I be enrolled?

AFSers are almost exclusively placed in state schools, and private school placements are very rare. Students are placed in the scuola media superiore (high school). The Italian school system has many different kinds of high schools with different academic focuses, including classical, scientific, linguistic, artistic, technical, or vocational schools. AFSers might be placed in any of these. In what grade level will I be enrolled? Students are usually placed in the third or fourth year of a five-year Italian high school (scuola media superior). Hosted students are never placed in the last year of high school, since that year is completely dedicated to studying for and taking Italian state exams.

Can I choose my classes? What classes are available?

The classes students take will vary depending on the type of school in which they are placed. AFS Italy and school tutors will choose the best type of school and the best curriculum for exchange students based on their academic record, host family location, and school availability. Students placed in Liceo Classico will focus on the humanities, with classes in subjects such as Latin, Greek, history, philosophy, art, Italian, biology, and PE. Liceo Scientifico stresses scientific subjects, although they also provide a general education in humanities and languages. Classes include languages, math, PE, science (biology, astronomy, and physics), Italian, and Latin. Students in linguistic schools focus on foreign languages and take classes such as Italian literature, Latin, art history, English, French, German or Spanish, math, and science. Students in art or technical schools may take languages, business, arts, administration, accounting, law, Italian, and sciences.

In what language will the classes be taught?

All classes are taught in Italian.

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

A uniform is not necessary. Italian schools require students to buy their own textbooks. AFSers should find out what books they need as soon as possible, and should be able to borrow some of the books from host siblings, the school library, or the local AFS Italy chapter. If students are unable to find all of their books this way and have to buy them, AFS Italy will refund the cost.

Are extra-curricular activities available?

Traditionally, Italian high schools do not offer after-school activities, but in recent years, more and more schools have been offering them. The availability and type of extra-curricular activities vary from school to school, but sports and theater are the most common.

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?

AFS students can receive a certificate of attendance and an informal evaluation from their host school. Students should inform their AFS counselor and school tutor in Italy of any documents they need in order to receive credit at their home schools.

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.