

5.10.2017

Dear year students,

I hope you are doing well!

The autumn has hit the Finland with its rainy days, cold mornings but also lovely autumn colors. You might have also noticed that it is getting darker earlier and earlier in the evenings and mornings are dark too.

This is why in Finland we have this thing called a reflector. The reflector is the best life insurance you have for this time of the year. With this letter we are sending you a reflector, sponsored by a company called Futurice. Below you can find a picture on where to attach the reflector. The most important is that it is attached so that it can hang freely and can be seen from many sides so the car drivers can see you. Even the street lights are not enough when it gets dark in the evening and it is actually also written to a Finnish law that everyone should wear a reflector.

Also, as the weather is getting colder it is important to start wearing more clothes than you might have used to. Many families in Finland like to do outdoor activities. To be able to fully engage in the life of your host family it is a matter of dressing yourself properly and warmly, as host families often wish that you take part of the family activities. Ask your host family for some guidance and more winter clothes if necessary, they are usually very happy to help if you ask. Also your contact person or friends might have some extra clothes to lend to you.

The dark weather might effect on us in many ways, also mentally. It is normal to feel homesick from time to time. Then even the normal things might feel difficult. Don't stay alone with your feelings. Talk with your host family, contact person or the volunteers. Take part on the different activities in school. It is a fact that doing sports and exercising clearly help the autumn depression. Don't assume that the other people know what you are feeling, talk and open up to the people close to you. Only that way you can find mutual understanding.

Remember that the most important part of the exchange year is to live daily life with your host family. Get excited about the daily things and how things are done differently. Take part your host family's activities and offer your help. Be open for new things, learn and get curious. Remember sometimes daily can be boring and that is normal. Your own attitude makes the difference!

Keep warm and enjoy the autumn days!

Best regards

Suvi

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