

## The AFS Approach to Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic is making everyone think carefully about how international travel may affect one's health. As a parent, your concerns are totally valid, and AFS's number one priority is the health and safety of your child. We are closely monitoring the situation globally and will make decisions about our programmes using the most up-to-date information. There are three overarching factors that will guide our decisions.

1. **AFS has more experience than any other exchange provider when it comes to ensuring safe exchange programmes for young people:** AFS has over 70 years of experience in helping young people participate in global exchanges. We have extremely experienced risk management, crisis and support staff. When making decisions about the safety of our participants, we consider guidance from local governments, the World Health Organization, and our own private crisis and risk management consulting services.
2. **If your child goes abroad with AFS, they will be supported by a robust Network of adults that can navigate crises:** AFS participants live with host families who care for your children as if they are their own; they will be supported by a local chapter of volunteers; their experience will be supported by the experienced and highly trained support staff that work at our Partner Organizations; and we have a global risk management team that is constantly monitoring our Network and ensuring that Participants are well taken care of. We are confident in our ability to manage complex and challenging situations, this has been borne out by our response to the current pandemic – supporting students in the country of their exchange programme and arranging safe evacuation back to their home countries when that became necessary.
3. **Our mission at AFS is to promote intercultural exchange and learning:** Nothing is more important to us than the safety of your child, and we will do all that we can to provide for them the safest possible experience. We can help you find information and make informed decisions about your child's study abroad.

The situation with respect to Covid-19 can change from week to week; therefore, if you and your child go forward with a planned exchange programme, we would be in regular contact with you during the preparation phase and would work with you to ensure that any questions or issues are addressed, so that you can be as comfortable as possible in supporting your child to participate in an exchange programme.

### AFS Interculture South Africa