

WELCOME TO HONG KONG



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2017

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AFS Hong Kong Contact Information

AFS Hong Kong office is located in Wanchai. Staff should be called in the event of an emergency or if you need immediate assistance and are unable to reach any of your volunteer contacts. Please complete your local contact information at the bottom of the page immediately.

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9:00am – 5:00pm

** Close on Public Holidays*

Local Contact Information

Host Family Name & Address:

Host Family Phone Number:

Support Contact Name & Address:

Support Contact Phone Number:

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Introduction

WELCOME TO HONG KONG !

This is a fantastic opportunity for you to experience Hong Kong's culture and diversity and we look forward to sharing that path with you. As a host student, you will serve as your country's ambassador.

You will enroll in a public secondary school, while living with a Hong Kong host family who will open their home and hearts to welcome you. With a positive attitude and respect for others, you will forge a lifetime bond with your host family.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you adjust to your exchange experience. It is designed to give you brief introduction to life in Hong Kong and to provide you with basic information about your program.

General Information about Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a modern, exciting, crowded, busy, noisy city with lots of high-rises where millions of people, most of whom are Chinese but there are also people from all over the world who come to live and work in Hong Kong. This beautiful city has become known for being as a financial and trading hub of Asia. Our container port is one of the busiest ports in the world.

The HKSAR Government

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China is headed by the Chief Executive who is being advised by the Executive Council.

At central level is the Legislative Council which legislates, controls public expenditure and monitors the Administration's performance. At district level, 18 district boards advise in implementation of policies in their respective territories.

The HKSAR has an independent judiciary and is responsible for administration of justice and interprets laws enacted by the legislature. The system is being practiced in Hong Kong is prescribed by the Basic Law, a constitution of the HKSAR which took effect upon its establishment since 1 July, 1997.

Geography and Population

Geographically, Hong Kong is in the southern coast of mainland China, comprising of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. With 7 million people and land area of 1,097 square kilometres, Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated places in the world.

Climate

Although Hong Kong lies within the tropics, it has remarkable four seasons temperate climate over the year. However upon arrival, temperatures will likely be as high as 32°C (90°F), and humid. During November and December there will be pleasant breeze, plenty of sunshine and mild temperatures. During January and February, it is common for temperature to drop below 10°C (50°F) in urban areas. This may not sound cold to some, but the air is damp and lack of heating in schools therefore you will feel colder than it appears to be. March and April usually brings the "plum rains," or monsoons. May to August is hot and humid with frequent showers and thunderstorms. Typhoons are not uncommon late in the summer.

Language

Both English and Chinese are official languages in Hong Kong. Cantonese (Guangdong Hwa, hwa means dialect) is the major Chinese dialect spoken in Hong Kong and other parts of Guangdong province. Owing to the territory's British heritage and pervasive international commercial contacts, many people understand and speak varying degrees of English. Although many people speak some English, do not expect that you will be speaking English all the time. In fact, it is possible that your host family will know very little or no English.

Your year in Hong Kong will be a valuable time for learning –Guangdong Hwa as there are very few other places in the world where this language is commonly used.

Electricity

Electric current in Hong Kong is 220 to 240 Volt AC and electrical appliances can be bought. Should you borrow electrical appliances from our host family then please make sure to return them.

Food

Hong Kong offers plenty of delights for your taste buds. A basic Chinese home cooked meal consists of fish, meat, eggs, vegetable and rice. Most of the dishes are either stir-fried or steamed. Salads, raw vegetables and dairy products such as milk or cheese, are available in Hong Kong but are not commonly consumed.

There are a lot of rumors about eating habits. Some of them may be true in Mainland China but for Hong Kong consumes common meat such as beef, pork, mutton, poultry (chicken, duck) and seafood. Believe it or not, many teenagers are still packing school lunch from home with rice and meat in a thermal container. Families prefer to dine together in nights of weekdays and some families will start dinner around 8 PM when everyone is home. Most families will serve Chinese cuisines, however Hong Kong is notorious for international cuisines with hundreds of different cuisines available in restaurants. Dining out is popular habit among locals mostly at weekends.

Communication Services

Telephone calls within Hong Kong are free of charge on leased private phone. Some shops and restaurants offer free phones while pay phones are also available. Pay phones charge HK\$1 per local call. Mobile communication is very cheap compared with most other countries in the world. All students are advised to have a SIM mobile phone. The rechargeable SIM cards are available for sale in different service providers. You would need one for effective communication in the year.

International calls on fixed line can be quite expensive pending on destinations. If you need to use the host family's fixed line for long distant calls, you need to ask for permissions and pay them the charges. If your country can conveniently connect to the internet, using internet communication would be free or much cheaper dependent on your subscription of your mobile data plan. Nowadays, due to the popular of internet communication, the voice or video calls on Whatsapp is free of charge if you are able to connect to the internet at home or at some internet hotspots in McDonald, Starbuck or at some public venues.

Transportation

Hong Kong has one of the best public transportation systems in the world: buses, trams, ferries, trains, light rails, taxis usher people around daily. Using public transport is a fun way to get to know Hong Kong.

Octopus card is a modern fare collection system for almost all modes of transportation. You are strongly advised to buy an octopus card for your daily travel needs as some public transport offer student concession fares. Please bear in mind that AFS students will use public transport to and from school. The Octopus card is also a electronic wallet. You may use the card to pay for your purchase in many shops. Do keep you card charged with enough money before getting on a bus or paying for purchase.

About AFS Hong Kong

As an AFS student, you will become part of the largest community-based volunteer organization of its kind in the world. AFS is a not-for-profit organization with no political or religious affiliation; rather, we are driven by the mission to provide intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. Through our network of professionally staffed offices and volunteers, we send students aged 15-17 on exchange in more than 50 countries. Since 1947, some 400,000 AFS students have experienced the world beyond their own communities by living with host families, attending local secondary schools and taking part in host communities.

AFS Hong Kong was established in 1982. We have different types of volunteers, many of whom are "returnees" from our program. Most AFS partners around the world have volunteer structure based on chapters. Hong Kong, being a city has one large group of volunteers rather than chapters. To date over 3,000 Hong Kong students have participated on AFS program overseas and we have hosted over 300 foreign students.

The AFS Hong Kong is located in Wanchai across from a round building known as Hopewell Centre. You are always welcome to visit us.

Your home life in Hong Kong

1) Home life

Sunday is mostly "family day" when family members catch up with each other while going out for "yum cha" (lunch) and other outing activities.

In Hong Kong, it is common for both parents to work long hours. Some families may have very little time together, but they still consider themselves quite close. It is common to find a grandparent living under the same roof. This way, grandparents often take care for grandchildren while parents work.

Most parents require their children to stay at home as much as possible, and will need their children to inform them of whereabouts they are all the time. Also, Chinese families and teachers expect students to obey them and conform with their opinions without protest.

Your host family is different from your family at home and different from the families of other AFS students. Your relationship with your host family will also be unique. Still there are circumstances which are common to all AFS families. All host families are volunteers. The families offer their home to the exchange students without pay because they believe in the mission of the AFS program and are willing to experience the challenge of the intercultural learning together with other AFSers in the world. Do remember that the fee your parents have paid for you on this program is only to cover your expenses and the administrative costs that are required for your participation in the AFS program. The host families are not paid. Therefore, we expect all exchange students to show high appreciation to the host families on their generous supports our students in Hong Kong. Your host family would welcome you and let you be one of their family members. As such, you should greet your host family at the beginning and be clear of family routines and house rules.

You must respect family rules. Find out what they expect and try to discuss rules that are unclear. Never leave any question unanswered. Whenever you have any decisions, you will need to take your host family into consideration. You may have an expectation on your host family and the host family would

have theirs. If your expectations could not align, you need to proactively talk to your host family to resolve. In most cases, if not of any ethic, safety or hygiene issues, AFS expects students would cope with or learn how to accommodate the cultural differences. The initial impact or cultural shock can be great. In case of difficulty, contact your support volunteer for help.

Greeting and smile are important to start off any relationship. Do remember to greet your host parents in the morning and before bed time. Saying 'thank you' for services and giving is different in Guangdong. Hwa that you would learn in the first week after arrival. It is always nice to show your host family that you are grateful by frequent "thank you" and by participating in family activities. Helping with housework is a quick mean to establish sense of belong in the family.

Your host family is your primary assistance on problems. They will know what is "the right" way of doing things in your community and in school. They would clarify your doubt for many issues. Do not hesitate to ask for help from them. Moreover, it is more culturally appropriate to ask for permission which shows your respect to them rather than informing your host family about your plans.

2) Family Adjustment

No matter how you are positive and open in your approach there are bound to be some adjustments for you and your host family will need to make. Just by being there, you bring a new element into the home and this causes changes in relationships. Most of the time changes happen smoothly but sometimes you will find that uneasy. You may not understand what has gone wrong, and your family may not either but the only way to resolve uneasiness is by discussion. Talk about it with the person involved or with someone else in the family. Chinese families are more indirect and may hesitate to be very frank with you. Try to identify causes of misunderstanding and express your feelings politely. Direct approach to problem is usually the most effective even if it appears difficult at first. It may be a new approach for you and for your host family but it often helps.

3) Host siblings and you

Some of you may expect your host brother or sister to be a close friend and yet sometimes does not happen. Host brothers and sisters may be much younger or older than you are. Be prepared to make your own friends (e.g. schoolmates) and pursue your own interests without necessarily sharing your every thought with your host siblings. Sometimes it is usual to find that host siblings would become uneasy because you have shared a lot of attention from the parents. When this happens it may help if you would include host siblings as much as possible in your activities and let them know host siblings are important to you. You will both have to make effort and compromise to live together but neither of you should feel forced to be something that you are not.

4) Living area

Due to the lack of land, property in Hong Kong is extremely expensive. Majority of people live in small flats in high-rises. In many cases, entire flat may be no bigger than 350-500 square feet (32.5-46.7 square meters) and accommodate up to six family members! In some cases, flats have one room filled with bunk beds, a tiny bathroom and a small kitchen.

Because of these extreme living condition, host families in Hong Kong are very difficult to find. They are generous in offering you a portion of their limited living space. We treasure our host families and we hope you will too.

You will probably share a room with your host brother or sister and most likely be sleeping in a bunk bed. You may be surprised with the noisy condition and lack of privacy. We understand that privacy may be important for some students but also you need to adjust yourselves to a congested space where privacy could be considered secondary sometimes. You will be expected to be very tidy so as not to infringe on other family members' private space. The good side is that living in close will give you ample opportunity to forge a bond with your host family.

**** Useful Tips ****

- Try to avoid long conversations on the phone. Mute and put aside your mobile phone when dinning.
- Try not to stay in the bathroom longer than your allocated time.
- Try not to stay alone in your room for very long periods instead of being in the living room with the rest of the family.
- Inform your family where you are going, when you will be back before you leave home. Ask for permission if necessary.
- Be open and frank in relationship with your family. Consult your family when planning activities. Make them feel you are a part of their lives and they are a part of yours.
- Try to build up a sense of trust with your family, and you will be able to gain a high level of independence.

5) Your Natural Family

AFS believe you should learn to be detached from your own culture and fully immerse yourself in the new culture to maximize your intercultural learning experience. We would not restrict students contact their natural family, relatives and friends of their home country. AFS believe that frequent contacts would impair your progress in the learning therefore we do not recommend. It is also a deterrent from integrating with your host family and community. So do not make calls, skype or e-mail home too often. Try to adapt yourself to the new home rather than holding onto your old one.

Although some of your natural family might want to come and visit you while you are in Hong Kong, AFS Partners worldwide strongly discourage natural family visiting student while they are on the program as it might disturb or interrupt your exchange experience. In any of the parents visiting during the program, prior notification to AFS office and due respects to the host family are required.

6) Your Support Contact

You and your host family will be assigned to a volunteer Support Contact (SC). Your SC is likely to be a matured returnee or a volunteer who has been provided with training to deal with general issues that you may encounter during your exchange year. It is important for you and your family to establish a bond with your SC based on communication and understanding.

If there are issues that you feel cannot be discussed with your host family then it is important that you talk with your SC. He/she is there to assist you throughout your exchange.

It will be beneficial for you to develop a relationship with your SC early in the year. When conflicts or misunderstandings arise, it will be important for you to share with your SC in order to consider your next step. Keeping your thoughts to yourself will only prolong the problem and this would be unfair to you and your host family.

AFS is a volunteer based organization. AFS office has limited manpower to handle individual students problem. Your first point of contact is always your SC, neither your natural parents nor the office. Your SC is a trained volunteer who will be able to assist you. Similar to any other relationships, success of your relationship with SC will depend on the effort that you invest.

Keep an open line of communication with your support contact. Your SC is there to support you and your host family during good and bad times.

Useful Questions, especially when you arrive at your host family

1. What am I expected to do daily other than ...
 - a) make my bed
 - b) keep my room tidy
 - c) clean the bathroom every time I use it
2. What is the procedure about dirty clothes, when is my laundry time?
Where do I keep them till wash day?
3. Should I wash my own underwear?
4. What is the procedure about ironing clothes?

5. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.? Always ask for permission before using the family's computer.
6. Where can I keep my bathroom toilet accessories?
7. When is the best time for me to have a bath or a shower? Students are usually expected to take shower every day before bedtime due to the humidity and dusty in Hong Kong
8. What time are meals?
9. What can I do to help with cleaning?
 - a) wiping the floor
 - b) washing the floor
 - c) washing the window
10. Do I have a routine task at meal time?
 - a) set the table
 - b) clear the table
 - c) Wash up dishes
11. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
12. Are there any strictly private areas at home?
13. What time must I get up on weekday mornings and on weekends?
14. What time must I go to bed?
15. What time must I be home by?
16. Do you expect me to phone if I am going to be 10, 20, 30 minutes late?
17. May I meet other friends during the week? Can I take friends home from time to time?
18. May my friends phone me?
19. What are the rules about local phone calls?
20. What are the rules about long distance phone calls/ overseas calls?
21. How do I travel around in Hong Kong, is there a bus route, do I get a bicycle..?
22. What are the rules about going to church?
23. May I watch TV if I want to?

House Rules

To help exchange student in having a better interpretation of host family's expectation and avoid misunderstanding, host families are suggested to set a clear guideline/ house rules for exchange students to follow from the beginning of the program.

Below is an example of a list that host family can share with students. The content/ rules can be adjusted according to host family's habit.

Welcome Note

1. Welcome and take home with us.
2. We will treat you as mature and responsible young person in our family and will expect you to act as considerate, understanding and respectful individual.
3. We believe trust, communication and mutual respects are the essence for freedom.
4. Except for your personal stuffs, you are free to consume food or use our supplies as provided at home.
5. Please ask for permissions when enter parents' bedroom and using their personal computers.
6. We will let you be as at home, not in a serviced apartment. So you are expected to keep your home clean and tidy and to share household work from time to time. Clothes must be stored in designated place and washed clean from time to time.
7. We expect you would usually come home for dinner during normal school days. If you would not come home occasionally for dinner, we expect you would inform us on a prior day, or in any circumstance not be later than 5:00pm on the day for unexpected short notice.
8. Dinner time is at 7:30pm. We don't expect you going out after dinner. If the next day is a school day and you decide not coming home for dinner, you must come home not later than 10:00pm.
9. On weekend or holiday, if the next day is not a school day, you have to be home by 11:00pm and not be continuously on every day during long holiday. Staying out overnight with persons without an adult of your Host Family or a Support Contact is not allowed by AFS.
10. You are free to see friends and enjoy social life while you are staying with us but we would also like you to be home and share with us from time to time on interesting experience. We consider balance family and social life is important.
11. We would like to invite you to join our weekend activities and vice versa and expect you to promptly confirm whether you would join then commit to your decision. Open decision or last minute notification of absence is considered irresponsible.
12. Casual notification of being late or absence for home or for activities at the spot is considered not respectful and would jeopardize trust.
13. Friends are welcome. We would happy to know your friends and give them warm welcome provided that we are informed prior to the visit. In this connection, you are not allowed to take any friend home without the presence of an adult and prior notification. The door keys are for your own use and must be kept in your safe custody all the time.
14. Intercultural learning requires you to largely detached from you own country and fully immerse yourself in the local community. It is also the AFS requirement that you should be refrained from frequent contacts with your parents, siblings and friends in your home country. We understand you may need to adjust at the beginning and there is time difference between Hong Kong and your home. Frequent late evening phone calls or internet chatting would affect other family members and adverse to your health therefore should be avoided.

15. Frank and direct communication is most effective mean to resolve problems, mitigate discomfort and reduce frustration. If you have any concern, please talk to us directly.

Enjoy your stay.

Education in Hong Kong

1) School

The word “school” may conjure an image of a large area with a playground, football field, gym, hall and various function rooms. In Hong Kong this does not necessarily hold true. Due to the limited space, only a handful of schools have such facilities. Most schools are blocks of high-rises or part of a building with around 1,100 students. Some schools may use roofs for activities while others will organize gym classes at nearby parks or playgrounds.

Important!

- *AFS is an academic program and attending school is an integral part of the AFS experience.*
- *Every AFS student should be prepared to make an honest effort in school -- even if you are not academically inclined or have graduated in your home country.*
- *AFS expects you to do your best in school. School attendance and completing homework assignments are compulsory!*

2) Your School Experience

Most schools in Hong Kong are academically oriented as they emphasize on study more than extra-curricular activities. Hong Kong’s education system is intensive and demanding and you will be expected to follow school rules and regulations.

You will find Hong Kong schools very different from your own. Generally, they are considered strict and conservative with teaching methods that are not interactive. Schools are an important part of your exchange and it is mandatory that you attend all classes. It will be hard to integrate into school but the more you work the easier it will be for you. Although Hong Kong is an exciting city and you may be tempted to skip classes but this is not allowed as guidelines have been set for school absence:

- Students are required to attend classes punctually.
- Obtaining immigration visas, identification cards, etc., are acceptable reasons for missing classes **only** with prior approval from AFS Hong Kong.
- Personal activities are not acceptable reasons for skipping classes.

- In the event of an illness, a doctor's certificate **MUST** be present to the school and host parents must authorize school absence note.
- **Transferring to another school is not permitted.**

The school year commences from 1st September and ends at the beginning of July. Because you will be a student of the school, you will attend classes like everyone else. School discipline and respect for teachers is very important. Lecturing is still a more common way of teaching than having discussions with teachers about topics in Hong Kong.

A word about language: there will be English-speakers in your school. However, nearly all teachers and all students will be native Cantonese speakers, so you should be prepared that Cantonese will be spoken at school. You will be placed either in an *English as the Medium of Instructions* (EMI) secondary school or a *Chinese as the Medium of Instructions* (CMI) secondary school.

Some schools may offer overseas trips and AFS encourages students to participate these trips. However trip expenses will not be covered by AFS. Most schools design their own uniform and students are required to wear uniform to school. You will be required to purchase your own uniform at about US\$150. You should bring flat black shoes to wear to school. High-heel shoes are not accepted. Schools may enforce strict rules on personal grooming. Students may be required to have their hair tied up or wear short hair. Girls are not allowed to wear jewelry, make-up or nail polish while boys have to be clean shaven. Dyed-hair is also not allowed.

There are a lot of clubs (netball team, athletic club, debating society, drama club, history club, etc.) and extra-curricular activities in which you can become involved, and which will enable you to make more friends. As an exchange student, you are encouraged to participate in as many school activities as you can.

What To Bring

1) Clothing

In Hong Kong, seasons are very distinct and you may need to bring different types of clothing. However you may have heard that Hong Kong is a shopping paradise and you can purchase any clothing upon arrival.

Season	Month	Approx. Temp.	Suggested Clothing
Spring	March to April	around 25°C (75°F) with lots of rain	T-shirts, shorts and jeans
Summer	May to	as high as 32°C	It is advisable to bring a light

	September	(90°F) and very humid	windbreaker as most of indoor places are air-conditioned.
Autumn	October to November	20°C (67°F)	Long sleeves and jeans
Winter	December to February	10°C (50°F)	Sweaters, thick coats and scarf

2) Knowledge of your home country and community

Being an *ambassador from your country* you may be expected to give talks about your country to your host family, school and surrounding community. Bring items that will help you present your country and culture:

- ☐ Talks about your country
- ☐ Photographs of your home and family
- ☐ National attire
- ☐ Recipes (you will never imagine how this will change your year)
- ☐ Maps, pamphlets and books about your country
- ☐ Music in your native language
- ☐ Games

3) Hepatitis A

Hong Kong is described as a place with intermediate risk for Hepatitis A. Viral hepatitis is a statutory noticeable disease and each year a few hundred cases of Hepatitis A are reported. Hepatitis A vaccination is recommended before arrival to Hong Kong.

Money Matters

1) How much should you bring?

We suggest you to bring at least US\$3,000 which is HK\$23,400 (@ HK\$7.80 per US\$1.00) to spend on your year in Hong Kong. That money is to cover expenses such as general expenses and incidentals. Most students find that Hong Kong an expensive place with cinema tickets costing about US\$8-10 but fast food is still a bargain. Your host family will not usually have a car. Private car is not an ordinary mean of transportation in Hong Kong. You will have to pay for your transportation other than getting monthly reimbursement on daily trips to and from school.

2) What does AFS pay for?

- Transportation to and from school.
- Orientations.
- Medical expenses (registered doctor medical receipt is required for reimbursement).

3) What AFS does not pay for?

- Eye Care, preventive medicine, immunization, dental care, orthodontics or medical care for conditions existed prior to arrival.
- Uniforms: Your school will require you to buy uniforms and the cost will be approximately US\$150.
- Costs for school trips or trips on special activities organized by AFS.
- Non-required school activities such as school photos, yearbooks, photocopying, newspaper subscriptions, field trips, etc.

The First month

1) Hong Kong Identity Card

At the arrival orientation, AFS Hong Kong will provide you an application form for Hong Kong ID card. You will be required to complete the form and submit it to the Immigration Department of Hong Kong. After receiving your HK ID card, please remember to carry it with you at all times. Prior to that, you should carry your passport with you. Under Hong Kong laws, police officers are authorized to check your ID when deemed necessary.

2) Money - Bank account

You will be required to open a bank account from a list of banks specified by AFS Hong Kong. AFS Hong Kong will reimburse claims to your bank account. To open an account, simply go to any branch of specified banks, bringing with you your Hong Kong Identification Card or passport, and at least HK\$500 for your initial deposit. If you want to deposit a foreign currency cheques then bank service charges will apply and will take about 30 days to process. You are advised to keep track of your spending and ensure you have sufficient funds for your year.

3) School

At the beginning of the school year, you will have to register at your host school, purchase the school uniform and collect schoolbooks. AFS Hong Kong will assign a volunteer (First Friend) to assist you with these tasks. AFS Hong Kong will provide necessary books to you and if AFS Hong Kong does not have required books then you may wish to discuss with the AFS Hong Kong Hosting Coordinator before purchasing new books.

4) Emergencies

Under Hong Kong Law, anyone aged 15 or above is required to carry a valid identification document (such as HK ID card or passport). Police officers are authorized to check identification when deemed necessary. You are advised to show respect and cooperate with police officers. If you are not able to understand then you should identify yourself as an exchange student immediately. This is important not only in the event of being questioned by authorities but also in the unfortunate event of a personal accident or if you fall victim to a crime.

In case of emergency you should try to call your host family, your support contact or AFS Hong Kong. AFS Hong Kong office phone number is **(852) 2802 0383** and the emergency hotline is **(852) 9654 7381**. The official emergency telephone number in Hong Kong is **999**. Please keep your medical card with you at all times.

5) Monthly Reimbursement

Please be aware that AFS Hong Kong will not cover all your expenses while you are in Hong Kong. You will need to budget your money well. There are limited items that AFS Hong Kong covers. Please refer to this list:

What AFS Hong Kong covers	What AFS Hong Kong does not cover
\$ Transportation (the lowest transportation cost) to and from school including student fares for monthly ferry pass, MTR, bus, tram, etc, but not taxi	 Eye Care  Preventive medicine  Immunization  Psychological consulting  Dental care
\$ Transportation (the lowest transportation cost) to attend required AFS activities eg, student meetings, orientation, Mid-stay, End-of-Stay	 Orthodontics  Medical care for conditions existing before your AFS year.  School Uniforms, including shoes and socks
\$ Medical expenses – General (Original receipt from the doctor must be hand in for the medical claim)	 Costs for optional trips  Non-required school activities - school photos, yearbooks, photocopy, maps, newspaper subscriptions, field trips, etc.  Any cost occur while applying your Identity Card, Hong Kong bank account  Visa application for overseas travel  AFS year book  Personal IDD & fax  Entertainment and pocket money

Activities

1) Community Service

You are encouraged to become involved in community service during your free time. Most schools will offer a number of different community service clubs or unions that you can join. AFS Hong Kong has noticed that students who become active in community/volunteer service often integrate better into the local community. It is a great way to make friends. If you are unsure of activities that you wish to participate then discuss with your first friend, host family or support contact.

2) Libraries

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department manages public libraries in Hong Kong. They have wide selection of English books. Contact your host family, first friends or schoolmates to locate libraries in your area. Besides your school will have its own library as well.

3) Employment/ Work

According to the immigration law, *“a person who is admitted as student in the HKSAR shall be subject to the following condition of stay:*

- a) he/she shall become student only at a specified school, university or other education institution and undertake such course of study as may be approved by the Director of Immigration; and*
- b) he/she shall NOT:*
 - i) Take up any employment, whether paid or unpaid; or*
 - ii) Establish or join in any business.”*

Travel

1) Guidelines for all types of travel

If you wish to travel or you are invited by other to travel then please refer to the following guidelines:

1. You are only allowed to travel with your own host family, your support contact or other AFS volunteers whom are approved by the AFS Hong Kong office on individual case basis.
2. You **will not** be allowed to travel independently crossing the border until you have been on the program for at least six months.
3. Host family must first approve your travel plans. Approval means signing off the AFS Student Travel Authorization Form by the host family. Verbal approval is not an approval.
4. If host family has approved your travel plan then you must immediately notify your Support

Contact about your plan.

5. The Travel Authorization Form must reach AFS office for further processing 2 weeks prior to the departure date and be approved by AFS Hong Kong before the departure.
6. Travel should not interfere with school (unless a participant travels on a school-organized activity).
7. Travel should not interfere with attendance of compulsory AFS Hong Kong events. This includes school sponsored travel.
8. Travel should not interfere with host family planned activities with you.
9. Travel should not interfere with your adaptation or integration process. Travel will not be allowed if you are experiencing adaptation difficulties, as frequent travel will affect the integration process. Travel request may be denied if you travel too often.
10. Independent Travel should not exceed 1 day (no overnight).
11. Travel should not violate AFS Hong Kong safety guidelines.
12. Travel without prior permission from AFS Hong Kong is subject to early termination from the program.

2) Types of Travel

There are several categories of AFS Hong Kong sanctioned travel.

- Travel that is part of an activity organized by your host school.
- Travel with your Support Contact.
- Travel with host family member who is at least 20 years of age.

You can also request for an **Independent Travel** waiver after Chinese New Year. Independent travel is when you traveling alone or with friends, away from your host community for up to one day (no overnight) outside of Hong Kong.

In any case, it is your responsibility to ensure that your host family and Support Contact are informed of where you will be traveling to and your contact in case of an emergency.

For all types of travel, a signed travel waiver from natural parents is required.

3) Steps to Obtain Approval for Travel Request

All travel request form (see appendix 1) must be completed and sent to AFS Hong Kong office **at least two weeks** prior to departure date. Following procedures must be taken before AFS Hong Kong can approve for any travel request. Upon AFS Hong Kong's approval then travel plans can be confirmed:

1. You must first obtain approval for travel from host family and Support Contact. Should you be travelling alone or with your host school, you should inform host-family dates and destinations of the proposed travel as well as the purpose of the trip. You must provide emergency contact information to an AFS Hong Kong volunteer or AFS Hong Kong staff. Contact information should include the travel plans, itinerary and how you can be contacted in case of emergency. If your host family or Support Contact does not grant their approval then you will not be allowed to go on the trip.
2. If host family and Support Contact approve your request they must confirm your plans with AFS Hong Kong office by handing in the travel request form.
3. Natural parents' permission will be required for all travel. You will be responsible for contacting your natural family to inform them of your travel request. The natural family must seek approval for travel waiver release from AFS office of your home country. A Travel Waiver releases AFS Hong Kong from any costs, arrangements, or responsibility for any actions to or by you during the travel period. Please remember that you are **NOT** released from the terms and conditions of the AFS Participant Agreement during your travel.
4. AFS office of your home country will forward a signed copy of Travel Waiver signed by your natural parents to AFS Hong Kong. You may not travel until the signed waiver has been received by AFS Hong Kong office. When the preceding four steps have been completed then you may make travel arrangements according to the stipulated terms and conditions. You should not make travel arrangements until these steps are completed.

AFS Rules

The following rules apply to ALL participants hosted in Hong Kong at all times:

1. No Drugs
2. No Alcoholic Drinking
3. No Driving
4. No Hitchhiking
5. No Sexual Relationship

AFS participants should be aware of these rules and are responsible to oblige by them at all time during exchange. If an AFS participant violates any of these rules then he or she could be terminated from the program and be sent home immediately.

1. No Drugs

Unless medically prescribed, possession and use of drugs is not allowed. Participants are not immune from the laws in Hong Kong governing use of or involvement with illegal drugs.

It is forbidden for AFS participants to consume drugs except those prescribed for medical purposes. Violation of this rule will result in dismissal from the program and immediate return to the home country.

Q: What if I am not actually using drugs but I am with people who are doing so?

A: It is your responsibility to notify AFS if you find other using drugs and to avoid being together with the drugs users. If you are in the company of individuals using drugs or involved in possession or transport or distribution of drugs, you are liable as of the same offence and be liable for immediate termination for Early Return.

Your safety is AFS' primary concern. Drug enforcement laws can be extremely severe. The police can arrest or detain an individual on suspicion of drug involvement simply by association or being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Consequences can result in arrest, imprisonment, and criminal charges necessitating court proceedings. In some cases, a participant's personal safety is also at risk due to their association with people involved with illegal drugs. If you are arrested, neither AFS nor your home country can have much of an influence in the process. Therefore, in order for AFS to provide as much safety as is possible under these circumstances, we have determined that a participant's prompt and immediate return to the home country is in the best interest of participant's welfare.

For reasons mentioned, AFS Hong Kong recommends that you find out about events that you are interested in attending. Usually your host family, friends or teachers can give information about the events and people expected to attend. It is also important that you respect your host family's advice regarding your participation in events even if your friends will be attending.

2. No Alcoholic Drinking

In protection of AFS participants, AFS Hong Kong does not allow students to consume alcoholic drinks while on exchange. You are strongly advice not to go to venues with liquor licenses (bars, clubs and so on).

** Please refer to more details in the next page.*

3. No Driving

AFS Participants are FORBIDDEN to drive even if 1) you have an international driver license; 2) your host family or owners of vehicles offer their consent. Participants are forbidden to operate cars, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, motorboats, helicopters and airplanes.

4. No Hitchhiking

While hitchhiking may be common in some countries, it is considered a dangerous act in Hong Kong.

AFS Participants may not hitchhike under any circumstance. In addition, participants must not accept rides from strangers.

5. No Sexual Relationship

Adolescence under 16 is protected in Hong Kong by Laws to prohibit having sex with others. Sexual relationship is accompanied with responsibility and exposed to risk of disease or unexpected pregnancy therefore AFS students in Hong Kong are not allowed to be involved in any sexual relationship during the program.

Other reasons for program termination or early return:

There are other reasons that an AFS participant's program can be terminated. Here are some other reasons that program termination can occur:

- Taking unauthorized travels
- Staying overnight
- Continued unwillingness to try and adapt to lifestyle of host country
- Patterns of poor attendance and lack of effort and achievement at school
- Theft
- Eating disorder
- Violate local laws (Innocent is not an excuse of violation. Common law requires you to find out and comply with the laws of Hong Kong)
- Unauthorized visits from natural family members or friends
- Inability to adapt to host country and in particular to life with host family
- Moving to another host family that is not arranged or approved by AFS Hong Kong
- Injury or illness which keeps you from participating in AFS event, i.e. attending school or taking part in AFS or host family activities.
- Consistently not willing to abide by host family's rules
- Sexual Intercourse

** Please make sure you read the Participation Agreement carefully which was part of your application.*

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed. Most Hong Kong families do not permit smoking in their homes. Indoor smoking is banned in Hong Kong by law. Some schools are extremely strict with this rule and may expel students who have been caught smoking.

Alcohol

Your health and safety is AFS' number first priority. You, your host family and AFS Hong Kong are

partners in this effort. Actions such as binge drinking may lead to serious injury and even death (Binge drinking is when someone is consuming several drinks in a short period of time.). By signing up for the program, you agreed to AFS rules including policy on alcohol. Disregarding this policy puts your program at risk of being terminated. For this reason, if you do not obey this policy you could be sent home early.

It is against the Hong Kong law for anyone **under age of 18** to possess or purchase alcohol. Although, some of you might become of age to consume or purchase alcoholic drink, consuming alcohol is straightly forbidden for ALL students while on exchange. You could be sent home if you are arrested or suspended from school due to alcohol use.

Discuss with your host parents about their views on alcohol and Hong Kong laws on alcohol. Your host parents expect you to follow these rules at their home. You can also discuss with your Support Contact about under aged drinking.

Call your host parents or other responsible adult (such as your Support Contact) if you find yourself at a party or event where there is under aged drinking. Please do not jeopardize your AFS program by ignoring rules and laws about under aged drinking.

Stay Overnight

All AFS students must stay with your assigned host family throughout the program. Staying overnight or sleepover is considered serious offence by AFS which is NOT allowed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Will anyone meet me at the airport?*

A: Yes. AFS Staff and/or Volunteers will meet you at the airport.

Q: *What is Orientation Week?*

A: Orientation Week includes discussions on topics such as AFS history and mission, AFS learning objectives, orientation process, local orientation schedule, AFS policies, requirements and expectations from local community, safety, etc.

You will be reminded of other practical and essential information such as the name and contact information for your Support Contact, as well as emergency contact information and procedures. Another session covers expectations in the first few days after arrival, including school registration.

Q: *Will I have contact with AFS people during the year?*

A: Yes. AFS Volunteers in your community are your connection to AFS. These volunteers called Support Contacts. Support Contacts provide support to you and your host family. Your Support Contact will contact you (and your host family) on a monthly basis to assist with your adjustments in Hong Kong.

During the year, AFS Hong Kong will also plan additional orientations and activities for you and your host family. These activities will help you adjust to your new environment and culture.

As Hong Kong is a convenience city, you will be able to meet you (AFS) friends easily. However, you are strongly advice to put your host family activities in your first priority when planning for activities.

Q: *Am I required to attend all orientations?*

A: Yes! Attendance to ALL orientation activities is mandatory. Failure to attend any orientation may hinder your adjustment process, and jeopardize your program status.

Every AFS participant will experience a series of emotional highs and lows during their stay in Hong Kong. This is a normal and important part of intercultural exchange experience. AFS orientations are designed to help participants through this adjustment process. Aside from that, they are fun!

Q: *What can I expect from other orientations?*

A: The Post Arrival Orientation takes place 3-6 weeks after arrival and will revisit many issues introduced in the Orientation Week. In addition, following topics will be covered:

- Adjusting to a new family.
- The AFS support structure.
- Developing cultural awareness.
- Cultural adjustment strategies.
- School and friendship.

This is an occasion for participants to share their concerns and challenges they encountering and to share stories with others. Volunteers will be present to facilitate discussion by encouraging self-reflection to help participant gain a deeper understanding of cultural adjustment process.

Mid-Stay Orientation usually takes place in January. It offers participants occasion to get together and reflect on their year and plans to accomplish goals in the months ahead. As January is a time where participants may be feeling “winter blues”, Mid-Stay orientation can also serve as a way of cheering everyone up.

End-of-Stay Orientation helps participants to prepare for departure from Hong Kong and to readjustment issues participants may face when they re-enter their home country.

Conclusion

The foregoing pages are to give you an idea of what to do in extreme cases. Most participants will never experience anything of this sort, especially if you use your common sense. Treat concerns from AFS Hong Kong, your host family, support contact and school seriously. That's all part of the adventure!

"Remember you are coming here for less than a year; Make the most out of it!"

Appendix 1 旅遊申請表 (Travel Request Form)



旅遊申請表 Travel Request Form

申請日期 / Date _____

學生姓名 _____ 來自於 _____ (國家)
Student name _____ From _____ (Country)

旅遊目的地

Travel Destination _____

旅遊日期 _____ 多少天

Travel Period _____ No of days _____

請列出是次旅遊的目的

Describe purpose of the trip _____

請列明同行人士之姓名及與其關係 (如接待家庭，支援義工，學校代表)

Describe travel companion (Name and relations eg Host family, support contact, school representative)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |

旅遊期間之聯絡電話

Contact number at travel destination _____

行程表及所需交通工具

Travel itinerary (Train / Boat / Flight no etc) _____

住宿安排 (酒店 / 親屬家) 及 住址

Accommodation (Hotel / Relatives) and Address _____

允許及簽名 Approved and Signed By

接待家長姓名

Name of Host parents

接待家長簽名

Signature of Host parents

注意: 請參閱 AFS 規條及守則中有關旅遊的項目。

Remark: Please refers AFS Rules and Regulations of your travelling

註: 所有旅遊申請表必需於出發前兩星期交到 AFS 香港辦事處。

Note: All Travel Request Form must be submitted two weeks before the requested date of Travel.