

BIENVENUE AU CANADA !

WELCOME TO CANADA !

A GUIDE FOR AFS STUDENTS



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STAFF & VOLUNTEER NETWORK

AFS Interculture Canada was founded in 1978, our office is based in Montreal Quebec and has a staff of approximately 12 that coordinates all activities across Canada. AFS Interculture Canada operates through an extensive volunteer network.

Most students are placed in small towns or rural communities. There are many advantages to these placements, such as a friendly community spirit, well-organized activities and a greater ease in making new friends.

OFFICE HOURS & EMERGENCY CALLS

Our office is open from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our telephone number is (514) 288-3282 or we also have a toll-free number: 1-800-361-7248. The staff that work full-time are also the ones responsible for answering emergency calls, so make sure that there really is an emergency before calling. What constitutes an emergency?

A serious and unforeseen situation that requires immediate action. Ex.: Accident, serious illness, hospitalization, death.

In case of an emergency during non-working hours, please call (514) 575-5084. Or, for toll free, call: 1 800 361-7248, chose the language (French or English), dial 5 for emergency. Your call will transferred to the duty officer. We suggest that you contact your counsellor or your local committee before calling the emergency line as they are better placed to help you.

There are a few rules which you must respect. The legal responsibility for your actions falls on AFS which has endorsed your stay in this country. The following are four rules that are strictly enforced. Violation of these rules will result in you being sent home immediately. The rules are:

- No driving
- No hitchhiking
- No drugs
- No work

Students will be sent home for breaking these rules. Unacceptable behavior is also grounds for an early return. Any of the following will definitely be considered as reasons for an early return:

- Breaking Canadian laws
- Eating disorders (endangers the student's life and creates great stress for the host family)
- Irregular attendance at school
- Disregard for AFS Interculture Canada's policies regarding independent travel or family visits

No driving rule

Insurance does not cover medical care if you have an accident while driving, and there are also many legal problems to be considered. No driving means you are forbidden to drive cars, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, powered bicycles. Of course you may not fly an airplane either. The no-driving rule applies to every student, at all times, regardless of whether liability or other insurance has been purchased. If a student wishes to operate any kind of motor vehicle not mentioned here (for example, a snowmobile, a go-kart or a motorboat) or participate in any unusual activity that depends on a motor carrier (e.g. gliding) the student will require written permission from their natural parents.

A note about hitchhiking

The world has changed and what was once fairly safe is no longer - not even in Canada. Please, for your sake as well as for everyone who cares about you - don't hitchhike. There are much safer methods to get where you want to go ...in one piece!

A note about drinking & drugs

The legal age for buying alcoholic beverages and drinking in public is 18 years old in some provinces

and 19 in others. Be careful with alcohol. As an AFS student, you represent your country and people will judge your behavior as representative of your culture. You are, therefore, expected to obey the law and have the maturity to behave appropriately. Drugs are strictly forbidden. Not only will taking non-prescription drugs get you sent home but it may land you and your natural family in legal problems. And AFS can't help you.

A note about working

Foreign students cannot work in Canada according to the requirements of Immigration Canada (visa). Students are not permitted to obtain work permits or social security card in order to take a job. Violation of this legal requirement could mean your expulsion from the country.

AFS ACTIVITIES

Arrival orientation

Around 2 weeks after your arrival in Canada, you will have a mandatory Arrival Orientation with AFS Interculture Canada volunteer organizers. Its purpose is to outline various important elements of your stay. Since the orientation takes place with others hosted students, it gives you the opportunity to meet people from various countries.

Mid-year orientation

In January, you will be asked, along with your host family, to participate in the Mid-Year Orientation. The purpose of this orientation is to allow you and your family to share any concerns you may have, to discuss each other's expectations and to answer questions you may have. Participation in the Mid-Year Orientation is mandatory for all students without exception. Host families are strongly urged to attend. There is no cost to the student.

End-of-stay orientation

It takes place approximately one month prior to your departure. Endings are always painful and the purpose of this orientation is to help prepare you to leave your host family, the friends you've made during the year and the community which has welcomed you as one of its cherished members. You'll also be giving some thought and preparation to your return home. You have changed during the course of the year and going back will mean a new re-adaptation for you as well as for your natural family. This orientation is mandatory for all students. It may be your last chance to say goodbye to your AFS friends.

Other activities

Each chapter will organize local activities. Students are strongly invited to attend but it's not mandatory.

AFS INTERCULTURE CANADA: REIMBURSEMENTS & MEDICAL EXPENSES

AFS Interculture Canada is financially responsible for any necessary and emergency medical care, and obligatory school fees which are:

- School registration fees for compulsory courses (courses you must take)
- Academic school books for compulsory courses
- School transportation if not within walking distance

AFS Canada reimburses school fees up to \$300 CAN. Students must pay the fees and ask for reimbursement from AFS Interculture Canada within 15 days of the payment. No reimbursements will be processed after December 15th.

Fees reimbursed

- Registration fees
- School Agenda
- Mandatory books and photocopies
- All mandatory school material
- School transportation to and from home
- School identification card if mandatory
- Optional courses fees up to \$100

Fees not reimbursed

- School supplies (pens, notebook, calculator, locker, etc)
- Books reimbursed at the end of the school year
- School uniforms, sports equipment, artistic material, music instruments
- Transport to go home for lunch
- Student identification card if not mandatory
- Optional and extra-curricular activities, field trips, etc
- School pictures, graduation fees and yearbook fees.
- Other fees not included in the reimbursed fees

Students are financially responsible for clothing, personal items and cosmetics as well as for any trips they may take. Students should arrive with an allowance for the year for the purchase of clothes, toiletries and personal expenses such as entertainment. We recommend at least \$1,500 for the year. If there is a mandatory uniform for the hosting school, the student must either bring the appropriate clothing or enough money to purchase it.

Insurance coverage

AFS Interculture Canada provides its participants with medical insurance of up to \$1,005,000 (U.S.) and will cover all medical expenses up to that amount that arise due to illnesses and accidents that occur during the program and which are unrelated to pre-existing conditions.

Medication

AFS will cover the cost of prescription medication for participants for illnesses or accidents that occur during the program and that are unrelated to pre-existing conditions.

Dental Care

Not included in your insurance

AND FINALLY: So much information, too many things to remember! It may look like this now, but soon you will integrate into the Canadian way of living, and these things will seem perfectly natural.

In the meantime, we would like to tell you that a warm welcome awaits you in Canada. We look forward to having you here and, remember, there is always an AFS Interculture Canada person there for you.

Telephone call

Telephone calls, while they are done with the best of intentions, can interfere with a student's adjustment. They are sometime too direct and may bring many tears, homesickness and misunderstandings. It's alright to call your child, but not too often. Emails are more beneficial and beside, it can be kept and reread over the years evoking memories which would otherwise be forgotten.

TRAVEL: NATURAL PARENTS, RELATIVES, FRIENDS

AFS Interculture Canada discourages visits by natural parents, relatives or friends. They are quite disruptive to the adaptation process and can be an inconvenience for the host family as well as the local volunteers. The host families agreed to welcome a student, not his/her entire family! They may feel uncomfortable to refuse the visit. Any visit must be approved by AFS Interculture Canada. AFS Interculture Canada can refuse a visit if we feel it's in the best interest of the student. Please review AFS Interculture Canada's travel policy.

TRAVEL & YOUR CHILD

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that your child is participating in a school and family life program – students are not here as tourists. We will give them the permission to travel under specific conditions spelled out in AFS Interculture Canada travel policy. We encourage you to read it and make sure that your son or daughter understands it. Even though these rules may appear strict, they avoid many risks and problems for the students, families, volunteers and staff.

Understanding that your child will be far away from home, we want you to have every confidence that our main concern is his or her well being. If you feel that your son or daughter is unhappy in some way, please encourage him/her to contact his/her local counselor for guidance or support. If you are aware of a problem please contact the AFS office in your country and they will promptly contact us.

AFS & NATURAL PARENTS

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR SON/DAUGHTER AND VICE VERSA

Your son or daughter is going to study and have a family life experience in Canada. It may seem that this program is only for students and host families, but the natural family also plays an important part in it. Although this booklet is mainly addressed to your son/daughter, please take a few minutes to read it. Your support can be a tremendous help!

Your child will encounter a lifestyle different from yours and you will be involved in the preparation of the experience and in his/her re-adaptation afterwards. It is our hope that your son/daughter will not only profit from what he/she learns here, but will also make lasting friendships which can be extended to you as parents. We do hope you maintain contact with the host family once in a while as this will also mean a lot to them as we're sure it would if you were hosting a student.

Your son or daughter will need your support and at the same time, will need some freedom, especially at the beginning, to find his or her own place in a new family.

CANADIAN CURRENCY, PRICES AND SHOPPING

CURRENCY

Canadian currency comes in paper money and coins. The different bills are easy to identify since each is of a different.

	5 dollar (blue)
5 cents or a nickel	10 dollar (purple)
10 cents or a dime	20 dollar (green)
25 cents or a quarter	50 dollar (red)
1 dollar or a loonie	100 dollar (brown)
2 dollar or a toonie	

Living in Canada is not cheap. Going out for dinner, to a movie, a concert, etc. is expensive. Since you will have to pay for your personal expenses, we will give you some prices to help you plan your budget. All the prices are approximate and vary from one province to another and between urban and rural areas. However, you can get bargains even with entertainment. Take movies for example. Some places offer cheaper prices on Tuesdays. Instead of paying \$11.00, you'll pay \$8.00 or sometimes less. Many cities and towns have cinemas where second runs of popular movies are played for as little as \$2.00. Here's a sample of what you can expect:

Theatre: \$8.00 - 20.00

(Some Universities or Amateur Theatre groups put on plays that are free to the public)

Concerts (rock): \$50.00 + Classic: \$20.00 +

(You may find amateur productions or special "Sunday" packages in some communities)

Eating out (pizza, burgers): \$8.00 +

Haircut: males \$20.00 females \$30.00 +

NOTE: Student I. D. often allows you discounts on the above. Be sure to inquire.

SHOPPING

Canadians love to shop even though we are taxed for everything. Provincial & Federal Sales Taxes on items run from 7 to 17 per cent. So make sure that you take this into consideration when you're making purchases or you'll be in for a little surprise! Malls are very popular here as they are in many countries. Stores are usually open from 9 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. Monday to Wednesday as well as Saturday and until 9 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays. Many provinces have open hours on Sundays as well.

Clothes can be expensive. Don't forget that in many parts of Canada, the winters are very cold & you'll need the appropriate clothing. Many places have second hand stores that have become very popular or your host family may be able to lend you some of what you need for your one winter here. Write to them before arriving and find out.

GETTING AROUND & COMMUNICATION

POSTAL SYSTEM

Stamps can be bought at the Post Office, some corner stores, variety stores or drug stores. At most variety stores or drug stores you will also be able to get envelopes and postcards. Normal correspondence can be mailed from post boxes that you will find on street corners (they are bright red, you can't miss them). You really don't need a Post Office except when you want to send a registered letter or a package.

If you are sending a letter with pictures or information that must not get lost, register it. If it has any value, insure it; the fee is very small. You only have to go to the Post Office, fill in a form and pay a small extra fee.

STAMPS prices for a standard envelope letter (prices do not include taxes)

Canada: 1,00 dollar U.S.A.: 1,10 dollar Europe: \$1.85

TELEPHONE

Unlike some other countries, there is no charge for local phone calls. However we strongly recommend that you NOT spend too long on the phone as it might bother the other members of the family. In fact, this is often a subject of discussion between the host family and the hosted student.

Long distance calls outside the country are very costly. Remember that you'll have to reimburse your host family for all long distance calls that you make. Always ask your host family before making a long distance call. Maybe you should use an Internet program such as Skype to call your parents. Our policy stresses the importance of NOT calling home too often. We also recommend that you do NOT call home when an emergency occurs. It takes quite long to explain everything to your parents; it makes them worry over something that they can do nothing about. Remember in those moments that it is always better to call your counselor

who is there to help both you and your host family. You can speak with your parents once the emergency is under control.

Public telephones in Canada can be used to make any kind of call; local, national or international, as long as you have a pocketful of coins, a calling card or call collect! In phone booths you will find basic instructions about how to use the phone in order to make different kinds of calls. A local call will cost you only 50 cents but the cost of a long distance calls climbs rapidly.

TRANSPORTATION

As you already know, you are not allowed to drive any motor vehicle, even if you have a driving permit. The way to get around in Canada varies depending on where you live. It might be by bus, by car or by bicycle. You, your family and friends will have to organize a way of managing your transportation that's best for everyone.

Most placements are in remote area where you will have to ask your host family in advance for a ride.

School bus: If you live in a rural area, you may travel to and from school on a school bus. The cost of the school bus is covered by the school.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

CLOTHES

You can bring the clothes you usually wear at home; teenage fashion is similar all over the world. Do not bring too much, as you will be the one carrying your suitcase around until you arrive. Also keep in mind that there is a tendency to gain weight during an experience abroad, so in a few months some of your clothes may not fit.

Check the section that describes the province where you'll be staying and its climate. Winter clothes like heavy coats, sweaters, boots, hats, gloves and scarves are necessary for all parts of Canada. Rain gear is also essential as is light summer clothing.

If you need to buy new clothes or it is difficult for you to get warm clothes in your country it may be wise to wait and buy them here. It may even be possible for you to borrow some clothes from your host family. Please make sure to bring enough money for these purchases. You can ask your family about the amount that you may have to spend. Schools sometimes require special uniforms so we suggest that you ask your family. You'll have to pay for your own uniform.

MONEY

Bank card: You can easily find automated banking machines anywhere. Just make sure you can use your card in Canada.

Traveler's cheques:

You can bring your pocket money in traveler's cheques, which you can exchange in any bank upon presentation of your passport.

Credit cards:

These can be very convenient. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are widely accepted in Canada, but we do not recommend credit cards. It is extremely easy to spend too much without being aware of it. Few people your age will be using credit cards.

Banks:

You can open an account in a bank in your home city. Ask your host family to suggest a convenient bank and to help you open an appropriate account.

Bank transfers:

Using this means that you can have money transferred from your bank at home to your account in Canada. If your parents transfer money to you periodically you can't spend too much in the first 3 or 4 months. This is the best way to control how much money you are spending and thus be sure of still having some left for the end of your stay.

In any case, please bring approximately \$30 CDN to cover your small expenses the first days, as you will not be able to change traveler's cheques at the orientation site, and you will probably want to buy a juice, stamps, etc. Save \$10 to \$20 for the trip home at the end of your exchange year when you may want to pay for food, drinks, phone calls, etc.

A final note: Please keep in mind that your family offers you hospitality and is NOT paid. Spending much more money than your host siblings can afford will be considered ill-mannered and insensitive. Please be considerate.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

VISA/PASSPORT

All AFS students need a student visa to enter Canada. AFS office in your country will let you know how to proceed.

As Canada is so close to the United States, Canadian families often go across the border for short visits. Canadians do not require a visa to make such trips but you may need one. Therefore, we recommend that you obtain a multiple entry visa. You may live hundreds of kilometers away from the nearest American immigration offices and officials may be very reluctant to issue you a visa while you are in Canada.

SOUVENIRS

Bring things that will help you tell Canadians about your home, country and culture:

- Photographs of your home & family
- A map of your country
- A national costume
- Recipes
- Pamphlets, posters and picture books
- Music

OTHER

Bring this booklet with you. You'll be using it during orientation and it will be useful to refer to during the year.

FAMILY LIFE IN CANADA

YOUR HOST FAMILY: STARTING A RELATIONSHIP

As soon as you have your host family information, write to them or send them an e-mail. You will get to know them better and they can give you first-hand tips about clothing, whether you'll need a school uniform, etc.

If your host family writes to you, please answer as soon as possible. They are very excited about having you and they would think that you are not interested if you don't write back.

Your host family will appreciate it if you bring a small

present for them. A book about your country, something typical of your community, representative of your natural family and your way of life, or which you made yourself, will be great. It needs not to be expensive, nor do you have to bring something for each member of the family, just something which shows that you care. Start learning the language and become informed about Canada—this is the best compliment you can pay your hosts and a great way to start off on the right foot.

RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST BROTHERS AND SISTERS

You may or may not have host brothers and sisters in your home. If you do, you should not rely on them for company all the time. It may be that you do not have the same likes and interests and you may not get along well enough to become best friends. This is natural and should not upset you. Remember that real brothers and sisters are often not the best pals. In any case, you should be considerate and include your host siblings in some of your activities, such as going for walks, or inviting them to go to the cinema with you. Try to keep a good relationship. At first they will probably show you around, but it won't take you long to get around on your own.

You may be the centre of attention in the community because of your background. Your host siblings may feel like you are taking away the attention they used to get from their friends, teachers, parents, etc. It is not uncommon that problems of jealousy arise. A new sibling has arrived (you) and parents may be spending more time with you and paying more attention to you than to their own kids. This is reasonable, as you have not made friends or perhaps do not know the language well. Nevertheless, understand the change that this implies for your brother and/or sister and be sensitive to their feelings. This can be talked about. If misunderstandings are solved as soon as they arise, they won't pile up. Communication is the key to avoiding problems.

YOUR CANADIAN HOME

It is quite hard to describe to you the home where you are going to live as it might be in a small town, in the country side or in a farm. Very often families use their basement for family room. Just few students are placed in Montreal or near the town of Quebec. There is also usually few public transportation available, so it might be very different from what you are use to. Our host families usually ask their student to plan his activities ahead in order to make sure they can provide a ride to the student or make some arrangements to get a ride.

FAMILY LIFE

Canadian families come in all shapes and sizes. Some host families have single parents, some have young children and some don't. In many Canadian households, both parents work outside of the home and everyone pitches in to take care of the daily chores and meals. Many Canadian families are also quite diverse, so you may be living with multiple cultures under one roof!

FAMILY RULES

Mealtimes

Breakfast 7:00-8:00. Usually coffee, milk, tea or juice, and toast or cereal. A cooked breakfast is often reserved for weekends since most people work and don't have time to prepare an elaborate breakfast during the week.

Lunch 11:30-13:00. This is a meal that most of you will have at school on the weekdays. It often consists of sandwiches or leftovers of the previous dinner. You will probably have a fruit as dessert.

Supper (or dinner) 17:00-19:00. This is the main meal of the day. In many families this is the time for the family to get together before each goes on to individual evening activities.

Housework

In most families each member is expected to share in the housework. Some common jobs you may be required to do are:

- Helping prepare supper
- Washing and drying the dishes
- Taking out the garbage
- Washing your own clothes
- Keeping your room tidy and making your bed each morning
- Helping with the weekly house cleaning

If you are unsure about how to do any household tasks, please ask. You should leave any room you have used such as the kitchen or the bathroom tidy when you leave.

Bathing

As most members of the Canadian family have the same schedule, it is hard for everyone to take a shower in the morning. We suggest you ask your family about the best time for you to take your shower or bath and try to work out a schedule. Think of others in the family and don't spend a long time in the bathroom when others are waiting for their turn. Most Canadians take either a bath or a shower once a day for approximately 5-10 minutes; do not take too much hot water because of the cost of heating and consideration for the others who will wash after you.

Phone and internet privileges

Ask your parents about the rules for using the telephone and the computer. Don't spend an enormous amount of time on the telephone or the internet as the other family members might need to use it also. You should also inquire about long distance phone calls; whether or not you can call home and how and when you can pay for your calls.

SCHOOL LIFE AND YOU

School participation is an important part of every exchange student's experience. AFS Interculture Canada expects its students to be serious and responsible about school, regardless of their educational background or age. The endorsement of the local school system is one thing that makes our program possible; a student's irresponsible behavior toward school work can threaten the future of AFS in the community.

Your school experience will be unique not only because every community is unique, but also because Canadian schools are primarily controlled by local school boards. These locally elected school boards determine the courses offered in the school, the equipment, the teaching staff and the way the school's operation is funded. Canadians are very proud of this tradition of local control; it means, however, that your school might be very different from others nearby.

Additionally, local schools are comprehensive; they try to meet the educational needs of all school-age children in the community, often in one building. Thus, university-bound and vocational training students have contact with each other even though they may be in different programs. People in Canada feel that this is important since it exposes all students to a wide range of interests and discourages elitism.

Some foreign students coming from intensive academic schools at home have commented that Canadian high schools often seem “easy” compared to their own. Yet, for a student with limited English or French, any school work may initially seem very difficult. Since “easy” and “difficult” are such relative terms, making generalizations does not help much.

If you need a considerable challenge, take some special courses in your host school that you could not get at home. The newness of this material may provide a challenge. Some students can plan with their school administration for advanced, independent study in a subject they already know well. The basic flexibility in most Canadian school systems makes these alternatives possible. However, if school work is a continual challenge, let your host family and teachers know how you feel. Tutoring or special help in English, French or the course work itself may help.

YOUR SCHOOL ADVISOR

At school you may have a guidance counselor or an advisor. This may be the principal of the school or someone whose job is advising students, or perhaps a teacher. See this person before school begins and ask for advice on what courses to take. He or she must also approve any course changes you make during the year or semester.

Visit your school advisor from time to time and talk about school. Do not wait to be asked to come. You will be expected to make the approach without being asked. Doing this is a normal part of school life. Your school advisor can help and can give advice about your school work as well as about school life and activities.

DIPLOMAS

Students from some countries need diplomas from their Canadian high schools to get credit for academic work completed during their AFS year. This diploma must be earned, however, and no student who needs a diploma should expect to get one unless he or she passes the courses involved.

Not all Canadian schools grant exchange students regular diplomas. Some give honorary diplomas or certificates of attendance. There is nothing wrong with these, and they are valid statements of a year’s educational work, as long as your country does not require an “official diploma”. If you have questions about your own country’s policy and that of your Canadian school, please contact your committee or write to AFS immediately.

If you must have a transcript of grades or a diploma validated before your return home, it is your responsibility, not the responsibility of your host family or AFS, to make sure all is in order before you return home. In most cases, this validation procedure involves a fee which you must pay.

YOUR SCHEDULE

You should take a schedule of courses that challenges your abilities. Even if you have graduated from your school at home, there are still many things you can learn. When you choose your courses, take some that:

1. Help you understand Canada or your region of the country, such as Canadian history, Canadian literature, politics, or problems of democracy;
2. Teach you things that you could not learn in your school at home, such as drama, which can be useful and fun;
3. Help you further your education, such as mathematics, sciences, or languages.

Do not expect to take 12 or 16 subjects, as you may have done at home. In Canadian schools, academic subjects are usually taught every day of the week, and you will not be able to take more than five or six of them.

There may be some subjects in which you have already learned the material. Ask your advisor about this and, if necessary, you can take a test to see how much you know. A review of the textbook will also give an idea of whether the material is new. There is no use repeating a whole course that you have already learned.

THE FIRST DAYS AT SCHOOL

The first days of school may be confusing, but you will quickly learn your way around. In the meantime, don’t be afraid to ask questions whenever you are confused. Be patient with yourself; it will become easier.

A former student from Malaysia advises:

“When I first went to school, I had difficulty understanding my teachers. I know most exchange students experience this. The first, most important thing I did was to ask for help right away from my teachers. It surely helped me a lot. Also, I sometimes asked my friends. Sitting in the front row of the class sometimes helps, and this difficulty only lasts for a while.”

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

You may find many clubs and activities at your host school. There will be clubs for different academic subjects and for various hobbies and activities, like orchestra, band, newspaper and drama. These are an important part of school life and an excellent way to make friends. You should join and take part in a few of them. Ask about them first, and join the ones that seem best for you so you can really give your time and interest to each one. Attend a meeting first to see what the club is like.

If you are interested in sports, try to get on a team or help manage a team. Even if you do not participate, school sports can be a good way to get to know people. You may want to attend football games in the autumn or other games in other seasons. If you do not fully understand them at first, don't worry, you will in time.

Student government is also an important activity. More and more students are taking an effective role in the formation of school policies. You may be surprised at how much responsibility they have. Many schools give exchange students a special chance to participate in Student Council. Be sure to ask about this and take advantage of the opportunity.

SOCIAL LIFE & YOU

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Well, you are going to be here for a whole year, and you want to make the most of your experience. This is fine, but how can you go about it? There are many things to do, and the first and most important of them is to make friends. It will take effort on your part to achieve this objective; remember you are the new one, and once the first excitement and interest is over it will be up to you to maintain and deepen relationships. Close friends are never an easy thing to get, and it takes time. Your school may not offer a lot of social events or clubs, so it will be up to you to find activities that can interest you or to join other people in theirs.

Use every opportunity you have to get involved, go for a walk, talk to people, and take up some new activities like playing an instrument or practicing a sport. Find out all the activities available in your community and get involved in something that interests you.

SOCIALIZING WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Greetings

Canadians have many different ways of greeting each other. The easiest is a handshake, although you might also get a kiss on the cheek (or two, if you are in Quebec) or a big hug.

Dating

Interaction between men and women in Canada is based on a firm belief in equality of the sexes. Social relations between them are quite informal; for some newcomers who are unfamiliar with such customs, it might mean a slow and careful evaluation of this new freedom. When two people enjoy each other's company, one of them will often suggest that they go out socially. They do this in order to get to know each other better by discussing their interests and opinions. The event may be a very casual one, such as going out for coffee, meeting after class, or seeing a movie or it may be a school dance or play. Treat any such invitation gracefully, since others' feelings are sometimes easily hurt. However, it's also important that you be comfortable, and you shouldn't feel that you must respond to pressure. Respect for personal standards is very important.

Sexuality

Sometimes relationships become serious and some young people choose to become sexually active. Attitudes towards this vary greatly from one Canadian to the next, from one community to another. A visiting student should always consider his or her personal values and safety first and foremost. Self-respect, mutual consent, and protection must all be considered as well as the impact on relationships the student may have with their host family and within the community. Some host families may not approve of their student having a serious dating relationship. It is important to speak to your family about their expectations, it is essential to have open communication between you and them. Students should also keep in mind the spirit and purpose of an AFS exchange.

WHAT TO DO IF...

YOU ARE ILL

If you are sick, consult your family and go to the doctor. In case of serious illness or accident you should inform AFS immediately. You can go to any doctor your family recommends. Always carry your AFS issued ID card with you and when you visit a doctor don't forget the letter explaining the program (see attached).

YOU FEEL HOMESICK

There will be times when you feel homesick: for your parents, for foods that you miss, for a tight hug from your best friend... This is only natural; the strange thing would be not to miss anything.

Unfortunately there is no magic pill that cures homesickness; you have to stick it out. One thing that helps is to go to someone you are close to and tell them, ask for a hug, and talk about your feelings. You are not expected to be superhuman and everybody needs a shoulder to cry on now and then.

Another good idea is to keep yourself occupied and involved with your new surroundings. If you have many things to do you won't have time left to brood about what you miss; if all the things around you become familiar you will have a sense of being "part of the scene" and won't miss home too much.

YOU FEEL UNHAPPY

If for some reason you feel uncomfortable, if there is something very important or pressing on your mind, talk about it. The first people you should turn to are your host parents, brothers and sisters. They want you to be happy and want to help you.

When you have problems or misunderstandings with your family feel free to talk to them about your feelings; many minor difficulties can be solved with openness, tact and willingness to give it another chance.

Sometimes you may require help from people outside who can give you a different perspective on the situation. You should then call your AFS contact in the area, your counselor; volunteers are always willing to listen and to help you. Of course, at the AFS office there are people who care and can help, so do not hesitate to call if you need to.

AN EMERGENCY ARISES

Whenever something major happens—you are lost, your passport has been stolen or lost, let us know right away. Remember to always carry office and home phone numbers and addresses with you.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Do ask your host parents before taking food or drinks out of the fridge.
- Do say where you are going, and when you will be back before you leave the house.
- Ask for permission if this is necessary.
- Do obey the house rules even though some may seem restrictive.
- Do say good-night before going to bed.
- Don't have long conversations on the phone.
- Don't stay in the bathroom longer than your share of the time.
- Don't stay alone in your room for long periods of time instead of in the living room with the rest of the family.
- Don't take your host family for granted. They don't expect you to compliment them and thank them at every turn, but they do expect you to say thank you when it's appropriate. The words "please", "thank you" and "I'm sorry" can go a long way towards establishing and maintaining a warm relationship with your family.

Punctuality is an important concept to most Canadians. If you must be late for an appointment or even a meal, be sure to call and let the person know.

We know from experience that families get upset about these things. If you are not sure whether the family gets annoyed by something, talk about it!

ONLY THOSE WHO COMMUNICATE CAN BE HELPED!!

SAFETY TIPS FOR HOSTED STUDENTS IN CANADA

During an exchange year, students encounter many new and different situations and if left to their own devices, consequences could at times be distressing or even dangerous. With this in mind, AFS has devised the system of “program support” for all participants, providing a wide range of supportive activities and services. The purpose is to provide a “safety net”, a consistently supportive environment in which participants can ask questions, obtain advice and help. This is done through the counselor system, guidebooks and manuals and through pre-departure and arrival orientations.

AFS cannot supply all the possible answers, but through our support systems, we can help to guide participants towards asking appropriate questions and acquiring the skills they need to cope with complex situations.

In recent years, there has been increasing concern about how we prepare students on matters pertaining to their individual safety. The purpose of this section is to provide useful information that will help address concerns of students and natural parents.

However, it is important to remember that just as parents cannot totally protect their children from all harm, neither can AFS guarantee total safety; nor can AFS provide a manual or information booklet with advice for every possible situation that a student might encounter.

Generally speaking, Canadians believe that Canada is a safe country. We pride ourselves on the fact that we are different from the USA regarding such matters as the carrying of weapons. However, we all have an inner set of rules (some of us might just call it common sense) that guides our actions. We know that it is not necessarily wise to be in certain places alone at night, or that certain behavior or type of dress may send a message to people in the community. Although foreign students coming to Canada probably have their own set of “common sense practices” which work in their own community, and may have a preconceived idea of practices in this country (picked up from the movies or other media), we cannot assume that they are aware of practices appropriate in their new Canadian host community.

As Canada is such a large and varied country with many different communities ranging from large urban centres to small rural villages, it is not possible to give a set of common sense rules to our new AFS students. Instead, AFS recommends talking with the host family,

AFS local committee members and staff from the host school soon after the student arrives.

In the sections which follow, we will outline the basic areas that host parents and students should discuss. Students are encouraged to raise these issues with their host families. In some situations, these questions may seem obvious or trivial. In others, host parents may feel uncomfortable discussing the topic or may not really know how teenagers should act in these situations. In such cases, we hope that students may turn to their AFS counselor, local volunteer or school personnel to assist them.

PERSONAL SAFETY CONCERNS IN AND AROUND THE HOME

Safety practices vary considerably from one country to another, from one community to another, even from one family to another. Be prepared to discuss how your family copes with these issues:

1. Do you keep the doors of the house locked at all times? If not, when should the doors be locked?
2. If a stranger comes to the door, is it safe to open the door? What should I do if I am alone in the house?
3. Will I have my own house key? If I misplace a key or arrive home unexpectedly to a locked house, where should I go?
4. If there is a problem while I am alone at home, whom should I contact?
5. Where are emergency phone numbers listed?
6. What should I do in case of a fire?
7. Does the family have first aid equipment and a fire extinguisher? Where are they?
8. What should I say when answering the phone?
9. How much information can I give on the phone? What should I not give?
10. Are there any appliances or mechanical things in the home that might cause problems and of which I should be aware? (E.g. gas stove, furnace, etc.)

PERSONAL SAFETY CONCERNS OUTSIDE THE HOME

You should always ask your host family about any situations in which you feel uncertain or frightened. When you leave home for a party or to go on an outing with friends, you should let your host parents know where they are going, with whom and at what time you will be back. If possible, you should leave the phone number of the home you will be visiting. In addition to these basic guidelines, you and your host family should discuss the following questions:

1. Is it safe to walk around this neighborhood after dark?
2. How can I keep myself safe when alone, especially at night?
3. Is it appropriate and safe to wear jewellery and/or "expensive" designer clothes in this neighborhood and to school?
4. Is it safe to ride the city bus at all times of the day? If not, when is it safe?
5. Is it safe to use public toilet facilities? If not, what safe facilities are available?
6. Are there areas in the community or city where it is not safe for young people to be? At night? During the daytime?
7. What should I do if I get lost or separated from my friends? Whom can I ask for help? How do I use the public telephones? What if I don't have the proper change for a public phone? What if I can't find a public phone?
8. What are the laws (and practices) about crossing streets? Is it safe to cross anywhere or should I only cross at corners?
9. What kind of identification should I carry with me?
10. Is it generally safe to carry money with me? If so, are there certain precautions I should take about how much or in what way I carry it?
11. Is it appropriate for a boy and girl to go out alone or is it customary that they be accompanied by an adult or another young person?
12. What should I do if approached by someone I don't know in a mall or shopping centre? How should I reply in a firm manner without hurting someone or causing a bad reaction?
13. What should I do or where can I turn if I do not feel safe? (Is it appropriate to take a ride from a friend if I am not comfortable at a party, for example).
14. Is it generally safe to accept rides from friends and school acquaintances in their cars?
15. If the family lives near an armed forces base, is it acceptable for high school students to date forces personnel? In some communities this may not be acceptable.

PERSONAL SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE SCHOOL

Your parents will help you feel comfortable in the school setting and should identify the resources available to you if you have questions about school social culture. Such resources may include the guidance counselor, the principal or vice-principal, or a particularly kind teacher or school secretary.

1. What should I do if someone offers me illegal drugs?
2. What should I do if I know that someone is carrying

a weapon?

3. What should I do if I am being bullied or harassed by someone?

ILLEGAL DRUGS / ALCOHOL ABUSE

When you receive an invitation to a party or other social events you may not be sure if it's safe to go. In such cases, you are advised to find out as much as you can about the event, including where it is being held and who will be there. Friends, host siblings, host parents or school teachers may be able to provide this information. It is the prerogative of host parents to decide if their student should not attend an event, even if other students are attending. If you feel your parents are being unreasonable, you might ask them to speak to the parents of other students who will be attending or try to find more information which will respond to their concerns and worries. You can also contact your counselor, local volunteers or AFS staff if you feel the need to.

Although you may not be of legal drinking age, you may well find yourself in situations where other youth are drinking or are using drugs. If you use drugs while in Canada, you will be sent home immediately. Although drinking of alcohol is not specifically against AFS rules, practices and sanctions differ greatly from one community to another and from one family to another. Drinking in a private home may not be an offence, but if under-age students are caught in a bar or public place drinking they may be arrested by the police. Students using false ID to get into the bar or club may be in serious trouble. Abuse of alcohol is cause for an early return. Even if you do not use drugs or drink alcohol, you may find yourself at a party where others are drinking and you may feel uncomfortable. If you decide to stay at the party, you may find that the person who is supposed to provide you with a drive home has been drinking and should not be driving. Before you go to parties or social events, you should discuss these questions with your parents.

1. How should I respond if other young people are pressuring me to have a drink or take drugs and I do not want to?
2. If I am uncomfortable at a party and want to leave early, but do not want to act like a prude, what should I do? What excuses should I give?
3. If I want to leave a party early, will you agree to come and pick me up? Can I take public transport? Can I call a taxi?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

AFS Interculture Canada has a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment. The term “sexual harassment” should be understood to include all circumstances that include inappropriate actions of a sexual nature, including those actions where an AFS participant seems to have consented.

Most of the participants are minors, and to include them in inappropriate sexual relations would be considered a criminal act subject to a police investigation.

In fact, what is construed as consent on the part of the AFS participant can create confusion. AFS participants are in a vulnerable position throughout their intercultural experience since the majority of their cultural standards and benchmarks, if not all, no longer apply in their new surroundings.

Host parents, employees and volunteers are in a position of authority, control and influence and therefore should never act in such a way that suggests sexual connotations towards a participant.

Without any hesitation, counsellors or participants themselves must immediately transmit to the Program Director or the Executive Director of AFS Interculture Canada any allegation or confirmation of inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Examples of behavior that would be considered sexual harassment:

- Vulgar or suggestive verbal conduct
- Non-verbal conduct which may include but is not limited to: exhibitionism or exposure to suggestive objects such as: obscene gestures, pornographic material, Websites, posters, pictures, written material, cartoons or drawings.
- Physical conduct that is inappropriate and undesired. This may also include, but is not limited to: Touching, pinching, kissing, hugging without consent, intentional invasion of one’s private life and all sexual activities using force or intimidation.
- A consensual relationship which is inappropriate between a participant and a person in a position of authority to them. Among others, all sexual relations with a member of the host family, a volunteer or an AFS employee are considered inappropriate.

EMERGENCIES

The role of the military or police authorities may vary from country to country. In most countries, adolescent boys are more likely than girls to find themselves being

questioned by the police. AFS students are advised to show respect and cooperation with authorities, even though they may be innocent of any crime and may think they are being unfairly treated.

In such situations, you may not understand what is being said by the authority figure. Generally, the best advice is for you to say that you do not understand and to show your AFS identification card. This is also important if you are involved in an accident or are the victim of a crime.

Discuss the following questions with your host family:

1. In an emergency, who should be called first? (The host family, the local counsellor, the AFS office?) Make sure that you always have the numbers of these people readily available. Keep them near the phone in your home. If you did not receive these numbers at arrival orientation, contact your local AFS contact or the National Office to get them.
2. Is the 911 number used in your community? If not, is there another emergency number you may use? Under what circumstances? How and when should this number be used?
3. Are there any local curfews in your community?
4. Are there areas near your community that are considered off limits for students?

CONCLUSION

The best general advice AFS can recommend regarding issues of personal safety are:

- Get to know the host culture well through questions, dialogue and discussion with your host family, peers, and the local AFS contacts
- Take any concerns seriously that your host family and school have expressed and follow their advice
- Do not ignore your own “instinct” in any given situation or feel you have to compromise your own personal behavior, values or beliefs. These are valuable resources in making decisions about what to do.
- Always carry your AFS card with you
- Do not hesitate to get advice from your local volunteer or AFS staff.

WELCOME TO CANADA!

As an AFS Interculture Canada student you should have some knowledge of Canada's system of government. The comparison between your own country and Canada should also prove interesting. In addition, you'll probably be expected to know some basic facts when you start school and also when you return to your own country. The information on the next few pages will help you get started.

CANADA'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Our national anthem is "Oh Canada" and the Canadian flag is white and red with a red maple leaf in the centre. Canada is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. There are three levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal, each of which has jurisdiction over certain areas.

In law, the Queen is Head of State, but the elected Parliament actually makes the laws that govern the country. The Governor-General is the official representative of the Queen in Canada. The Prime-Minister is the executive head of government and the most important Canadian official.

Canada has several major political parties as well as independents. The party that wins the largest number of seats in the elections forms the government and its leader becomes the head of the government. The leaders are the Prime Minister (federal) and Premier (provincial). The party that wins the second largest number of seats becomes the Official Opposition. Its head is the Leader of the Opposition.

CANADA, ITS GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Canada is the second largest country in the world covering the northern half of the North American continent except for Alaska. Canada is a vast and varied land, from the Rocky Mountains, the prairies, central Canada, the rugged coasts, sandy beaches and fertile valleys of the eastern seaboard to our cosmopolitan cities. "Canada is huge!" exclaims many a foreign student when first arriving, and even later, they can't get over the immensity of our land. Distances are therefore great; a fact that we would like to impress upon you. For example, the distance from Montreal to Vancouver is 4726 km; from St. John's to Victoria is over 6000 km; whereas from Montreal to Toronto is a mere 542 km.

Like many large urban areas, Canada's big cities are multi-ethnic and multicultural. Because so many nationalities already are resident in these communities, foreign students are not seen as being special. In smaller towns and villages, people welcome foreign students with open arms, eager to learn about their culture, customs and language as well as share their own. In these communities, the AFS student truly feels special, welcomed and valued. This explains why most of our placements are rural.

But rural in Canada is different from rural in Europe or Asia. In Canada, there are small communities with only a few hundred people which may be many km from a neighbouring community. Look at the size of Canada and the size of its population (about 33.5 million) and compare it to your own country. You will see immediately that there are many empty spaces. Do not expect to visit many areas of Canada during your stay. Our country is probably many times larger than yours!

So please read the following information on Canada and its provinces, take note of the size of the area as well as the population mentioned for some of its cities. Get a map and find its location. You will be a little more prepared for your arrival and exciting adventure in our beautiful and vast country.

THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES: PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, NEW BRUNSWICK, NOVA SCOTIA and NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The Atlantic Provinces generally have a humid, continental climate. Halifax, Nova Scotia is representative of the region. Average daytime highs during the summer months of June to August are 22.5 Celsius. Light constant breezes and low humidity are characteristic. Winter is cold, with temperatures averaging from -21 to 6 degrees Celsius. Spring (May–June) brings warmer temperatures. Autumn (September to November) brings a crisp chill to the air and vivid colors to fields and woods.

ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River regions have a humid climate with cold winters, hot summers and precipitation all year round. Be prepared for lots of snow from December until April and deep freeze weather in January and February.

THE PRAIRIES: SASKATCHEWAN, ALBERTA AND MANITOBA

Interior Canada, which stretches from the Rocky Mountains to the Great Lakes, has long, cold winters, short but warm summers, and little precipitation (which occurs mostly in the summer).

INTERIOR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

This is considered as a Rocky Mountain climatic region. Altitude is more important than latitude in determining the climate. Wet, windward mountain slopes with heavy snows in winter, dry valleys with hot summers, and high plateaus with marked temperature contrasts.

THE PACIFIC COAST: BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cool and fairly dry in summer but mild, cloudy and wet in winter.

YUKON, THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT

Winters are very cold and the summers are frequently warm but cooler air from the Arctic can push southward. Precipitation is fairly low year round because of the high mountains.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

POPULATION: 139 800

CAPITAL: CHARLOTTETOWN

OTHER CENTRES: Summerside

One of Prince Edward Island's most stunning characteristics is the deep red soil. The highest point of land is 142 M. and the climate is generally moderate. Winters are long and can be quite severe, even though PEI is surrounded by the ocean. Summers are moderate and pleasant. The waters surrounding PEI average 20C in the summer and are ice-covered in the winter. The three main industries on the island are farming (especially potatoes), fishing (mainly lobster) and tourism. The population of PEI is the most rural of any province in Canada, with only 36% living in urban areas. PEI is also the most culturally homogenous province in Canada, with most people being of British or Irish descent. Twelve percent are of Acadian French descent, and there are small communities of Dutch, Lebanese and Micmac. The major language is English (94%) and 5% of people on the island report French as their mother tongue.

NEW BRUNSWICK

POPULATION: 747 300

CAPITAL: FREDERICTON

OTHER MAJOR CENTRES: Saint John, Moncton

New Brunswick is a blend of rolling hills, vast forests and beautiful rivers such as the Miramichi and the Saint John. It also boasts more than 2000 KM. of sandy beaches, rocky headlands and sheltered coves. The pace of life here is slower than in many parts of Canada and New Brunswickers like it that way. North-eastern N. B. is the territory of the Acadians, the same French farmers who in the 18th century journeyed to Louisiana and became the Cajuns. The English in the province are mostly of Irish and loyalist descent (loyalists were originally Americans who moved to Canada after the revolution of 1776). Approximately one third of New Brunswick's people are French-Speaking. English is the language of the remaining two-thirds of the population.



NOVA SCOTIA

POPULATION: 938 300

CAPITAL: HALIFAX

OTHER CENTERS: Sydney, Dartmouth

Nova Scotia, the Latin name meaning “New Scotland” is the second smallest province in Canada. It is located on the Atlantic Ocean. No part of Nova Scotia is more than 60 kilometers from the sea.

North American Indians arrived in Nova Scotia 10,000 years ago and lived, traded and fished along the coasts until the arrival of large numbers of Europeans three hundred years ago. There is general consensus that we were “discovered” by the Norsemen around 1000 AD and referred to at that time as “Markland”. Other explorers followed, especially the French, led by Samuel de Champlain. In 1608, Nova Scotia had the first permanent European settlement in North America north of the Spanish settlements in Florida.

Nova Scotia is one of the four original provinces that made up the Dominion of Canada in 1867. The province is primarily made up of small villages and towns, primarily along the coasts.

Thick forests cover much of the province. The Annapolis Valley along the Bay of Fundy is famous for its apple orchards, and in spring is a vision of loveliness in pink and white blossoms.

Cod, lobsters, scallops and other seafood caught off the shores of Nova Scotia make it one of the leaders in the Canadian fishing industry. We lead the provinces in gypsum mining and rank second in that of salt. Our leading service industries include education, government, hotel and restaurant operation. We manufacture wood and wood pulp products, processed seafood, transportation equipment, and dairy products.



NEW FOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

POPULATION: 507 900

CAPITAL: ST. JOHN'S

OTHER CENTRES: Cornerbrook, Gander

Rich with history. Rife with culture. Sprawling with natural beauty. All these wonders have been here for thousands of years, embraced by those who happened upon them.

Newfoundland has a number of historical firsts. The oldest known settlement anywhere in The Americas built by Europeans is located at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland. It was founded around 1000 A.D. by Leif Ericson's Vikings. Remnants and artifacts of the occupation can still be seen at L'Anse aux Meadows, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. John Cabot became the first European since the Vikings to discover Newfoundland landing at Cape Bonavista on June 24 1497.



QUEBEC

POPULATION: 7 750 500

CAPITAL: QUEBEC CITY

OTHER MAJOR CENTRES: Montreal, (pop. 3.1 million) Sherbrooke, Hull, Trois Rivières, Laval

Quebec is Canada's largest province, with one quarter of the country's population. About 82% of the province speak French as their first language. An AFS experience in Quebec will be a French experience - you will eat, study, breathe and socialize in French, and Quebecers will be happy to help you with the language, as they are very proud of their distinctness and cultural heritage. Montreal, Quebec's largest city, is not only the second largest French speaking city on earth, but also home to many different cultures from around the world. From churches where services are conducted in Spanish, to Little India, Montreal is host to the world. An AFS experience in Montréal will therefore be very different from an AFS experience in a small Quebec town by the banks of a lazy river in the countryside. Quebec City is one of the oldest settlements in North America. Traditions date back to the 1600s and some, such as seasoning food with maple syrup, which was common among the natives even prior to this, are still very important in Quebec society. Even so, Quebec is as up-to-date and modern as anywhere else in North America.

Quebec has a severe continental climate, ranging from high temperatures of 30-35°C in the summer, to - 30° across the province in the winter. Quebecers love sports and outdoor activities. Not even the cold winters stop them from enjoying the fresh air. The young Quebecers you will be going to school with are independent and they are used to expressing what they think to their parents and teachers. Parents are seen as guides rather than as figures of authority in most Québec families.



ONTARIO

POPULATION: 12 929 000

CAPITAL: TORONTO

OTHER IMPORTANT CENTRES: Ottawa (Canada's capital) Hamilton, London, Sudbury, Windsor.

Ontario is the second largest Canadian province. The land is vast and varied, changing from bogs and boreal forest in the north to the Canadian Shield and fertile agriculture land in the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence lowlands of the south. The weather in the north is colder in the winter but just about as hot in the summer.

In the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence lowlands, the winters are long and severe, and the summers are short, though the temperature can attain highs of 30°C.

Ontario is Canada's industrial and agricultural heartland and home to almost half the country's population. In a park-like setting, Ottawa, Canada's capital combines the old world charm of its Parliament Hill architecture with its strikingly modern national museums. Toronto is English Canada's cultural capital, as well as the business centre of the country. It is among the world's most ethnically diverse cities. Niagara Falls is one of the world's natural wonders and Algonquin Park, with its 1600 KM of navigable canoe routes, is a very popular destination for Ontarians.

Most Ontarians speak English as their first language, though there are about 500,000 French speaking Ontarians, called Franco-Ontarians, who live mostly in the eastern part of the province.



MANITOBA

POPULATION: 1 208 000

CAPITAL: WINNIPEG

OTHER CENTRES: Brandon, Portage La Prairie, Flin Flon and Thompson

Manitoba's area is 649,947 KM and extends 1,225 KM. from north to south. It's a province that is comparatively level with land elevations rising gradually south and west from sea level at Hudson Bay. Two large rivers, the Nelson and the Churchill, drain into the Hudson Bay. Winnipeg is the capital and the province's main manufacturing and distribution centre, located in the southern part of the province. The Winnipeg event, Folklorama, is testimony to its multicultural identity, with as many as forty pavilions offering an array of song and dance, arts and crafts, food and drink.

Manitoba is considered the gateway to the west, and Manitobans can genuinely claim a multicultural heritage with citizens from many ethnic backgrounds - British, French, German, Ukrainian, Native Indian, Métis, Polish, Dutch, Scandinavian, Jewish, Italian, Hungarian, Filipino, Portuguese, Chinese and others. The main language of business and schools is English although there is a sizable French-speaking population and some students may be placed in French communities.

SASKATCHEWAN

POPULATION: 1 023 810

CAPITAL: REGINA

OTHER CENTRES: Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Humboldt

Saskatchewan is a young province whose roots date back about 20,000 years! Native Indians roamed the region thousands of years before anyone else arrived. The province is the birthplace of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and still has a strong connection to the RCMP, with the training academy located in the capital city of Regina.

The province is located in the middle of the prairies and is the largest grain-producing region in Canada. Images of wheat waving in the wind, fields of brilliant canola and mustard, and the most beautiful sunsets anywhere paint a picture of what most people expect of Saskatchewan. But Saskatchewan is also rolling hills, lush green valleys, and in the north, clear blue lakes and fast flowing rivers. Different types of wildlife can be seen everywhere! Regina and Saskatchewan's largest city, Saskatoon, capture the pace of urban life while maintaining the hospitality of small town living. The people who live in Saskatchewan come from many different cultural backgrounds including Native Indian, Ukrainian, German, Scandinavian, British and French. English is the primary spoken language.



ALBERTA

POPULATION: 3 585 100

CAPITAL: EDMONTON

OTHER CENTRES: Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, St. Albert, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie.

Alberta, with its vast plains, rolling range-land and rocky, snow covered mountains, is a study in contrasts. Since the Second World War, Alberta has been the centre of the Canadian oil and natural gas industry. It is also the home of the Calgary stampede and Canada's cowboy culture. In the energy industry, as with cowboys, risk is an important factor which defines Albertans. The western frontier spirit is alive and well in Alberta.

Much of Alberta is made up of plains and prairies, and it is considered, along with Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to be one of Canada's Prairie Provinces. However, the Rocky Mountains in the south west make it a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Alberta is one of Canada's most urban provinces, with almost 80% of the population living in cities or towns. The province is made up of diverse cultures, many from central and eastern Europe. English is the most commonly spoken language, though students may write their government high school exams in French, German and Ukrainian as well, reflecting the most common other ethnic groups in the province.

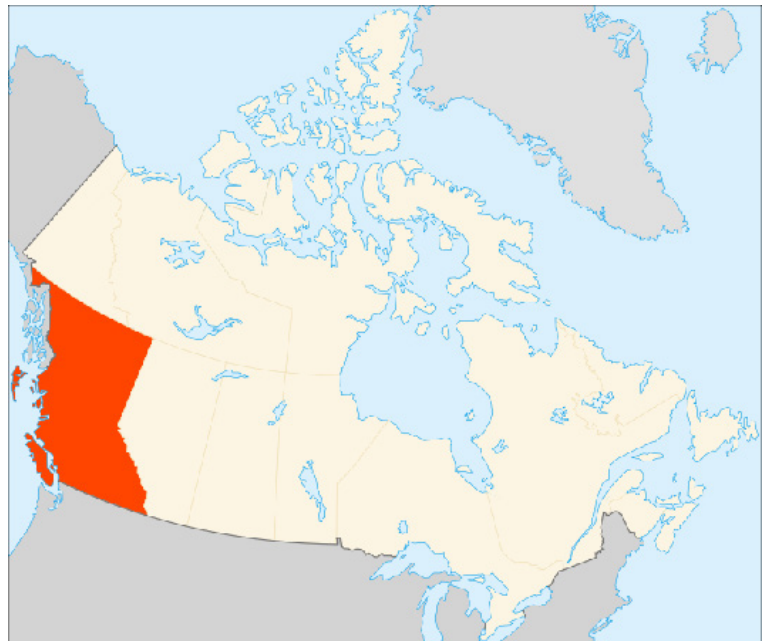
BRITISH COLUMBIA

POPULATION: 4 381 600

CAPITAL: VICTORIA

OTHER CENTRES: Vancouver, Kamloops, Prince George, Kelowna

Most of B.C.'s climate is similar to continental Canada - hot, dry summers and long, cold winters. The Pacific coast, from Vancouver and Victoria up to the Queen Charlotte Islands is mild and wet in the winter, rarely receiving snow, and temperate and dry in the summer. From the coastal beauty of the Queen Charlotte Islands through the lush interior rain forests to the peaks of the Rockies, B.C. is a wonder to behold. Most of the province contains mountains and plateaus. The Rockies in the east and the Coast Mountains in the west traverse the province from south to north. In the south are a number of elongated and relatively narrow valleys, such as the Okanogan Valley in which agriculture thrives. B.C.'s population is heavily concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Victoria. Vancouver is Canada's third largest city and set between mountains and sea on a balmy stretch of the Pacific. It was the site of EXPO 86 and the 2010 Winter Olympics. The majority of the population declare English as their mother-tongue.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

POPULATION: 43 300

CAPITAL: YELLOWKNIFE

OTHER CENTRES: Iqaluit, Haines Junction, Hay River

Northwest Territories (NWT) makes up over one third of Canada's landmass. This is a vast area of rugged wilderness, from taiga and boreal forests in the west, through tundra to the fjords of Baffin Island. NWT is for the most part very sparsely settled, with a large proportion of the population living in and around Yellowknife and Great Slave Lake. NWT is divided into two districts,

Mackenzie in the West and Franklin in the East. The territories have the largest proportion of non-English or French speaking peoples in Canada, as almost 60% of the population is of native Indian or Innu descent. The Climate of NWT is more severe than in southern Canada, with very cold, long winters notable for the extremely short days and long nights. Conversely, the sun shines almost 24 hours a day in the summer.

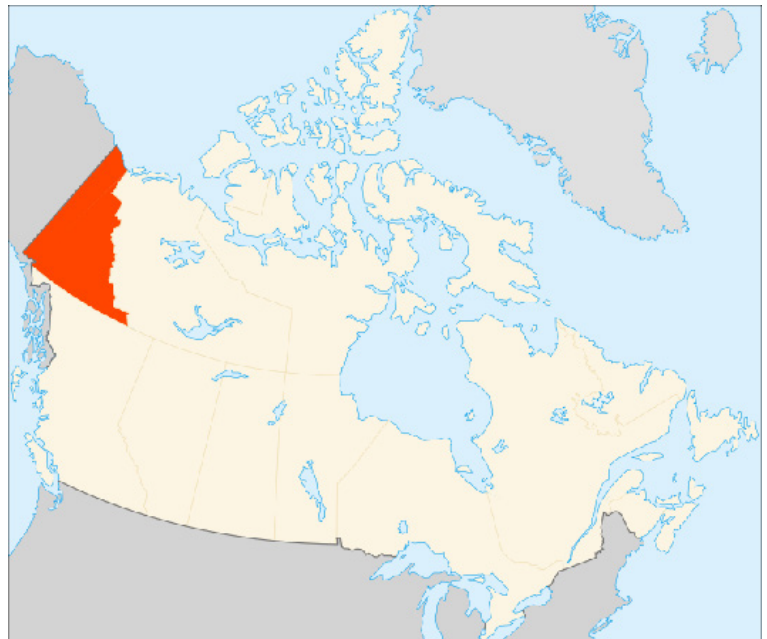
YUKON

POPULATION: 33 000

CAPITAL: WHITEHORSE

OTHER CENTRES: Dawson City, Faro, Watson Lake

The majority of the population lives in urban centers; about 2/3 of it resides in Whitehorse. The capital is the transportation, business, and service centre for the whole territory. The Yukon Indians no longer live like at the time of the whaling era. (About 25% of the population is Indian.) They have integrated among the non-native communities and have established a sense of pride for native cultural traditions and crafts which has also been encouraged in recent years by government programs. Tourism and mining are the most important industries. Visitors are drawn by Yukon's colorful Gold Rush history and by its scenic and wildlife attractions. Still today, the emphasis in mining is for precious metals.



NUNAVUT

POPULATION: 31 400

CAPITAL: IQALUIT

Nunavut (the Inuktitut word for —our land) was created April 1, 1999 as a result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. For millennia a major Inuit homeland, Nunavut today is a growing society that blends the strength of its deep Inuit roots and traditions with a new spirit of diversity. With landscapes that range from the flat muskeg of the Kivalliq to the towering mountain peaks and fiords of North Baffin, it is a Territory of extraordinary variety and breathtaking beauty.



POLICY AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING TRAVEL BY AFS STUDENTS HOSTED IN CANADA

AFS Interculture Canada recognizes that trip are often educational and fun but travelling can also increase the risk of accidents which can impact the health and the safety of the participants. This policy allows the students, the host families and the local AFS Chapters to take appropriate and fair decisions for all the participants.

All absence of the hosted student from his regular residential house and which includes an overnight.

TRAVEL WITH AFS

- An AFS trip is a trip which has been approved by the AFS Canada Program Manager
- No authorization is required

TRAVEL WITH THE HOST FAMILY OR THE SCHOOL IN CANADA

- Host family
- School
- Local Chapter
- Authorizations required

Procedures

- AFS considers that a trip with the host family means that at least one of the members of the family (parents, brother, sister) has the legal age;
- The student must obtain the authorization of his host family and the local chapter (or AFS Interculture Canada);
- The request must be submitted to AFS Interculture Canada at least 3 weeks prior to the trip;
- The student has to fill out the authorization travel request, must sign it, clearly detail his plans and give it to the local chapter;
- The host parents must obtain the authorization of the school if the participant is to miss days of school;
- The student and the host family must absolutely give the telephone number where the student can be reached in case of an emergency.

TRAVEL WITH THE HOST FAMILY OR THE SCHOOL OUTSIDE CANADA

- Host family
- School
- Local Chapter
- AFS Interculture Canada
- Natural parents
- Authorizations required

Procedures

- AFS considers that a trip with the host family means that at least one of the members of the family (parents, brother, sister) has the legal age.
- The request must be submitted to AFS Interculture Canada at least 3 weeks prior to the trip.
- The student must obtain the authorization of his host family and the local chapter (or AFS Interculture Canada if there is no chapter).
- The student has to fill out the authorization travel request, must sign it, clearly detail his plans and give it to the local chapter.
- The host parents must obtain the authorization of the school if the participant is to miss days of school.
- The local volunteer will inform AFS Interculture Canada and will provide the details of the trip.
- AFS Interculture Canada will contact the sending country to get the authorization of the natural parents. They will have to sign a document.
- It's the responsibility of the student and his natural family to obtain all the authorizations and document required (visa, passport, etc) to enter the country intended to visit and come back to Canada. Please note that some students arrive in Canada with "One entry only" visa, which means they cannot enter Canada a second time.
- All trips except to the USA: make sure the student has a multiple entry visa.
- Otherwise, he won't be able to come back to Canada. For further details, please contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at 1-888-242-2210 or visit their website at www.cic.gc.ca.
- **Travel to the USA:** If you don't know if you need a visa to enter the USA, please visit the following website at www.amcits.com. Click on "Foreign nationals" and then on "Visa Waivers". You will find a list of the countries which don't need a visa. You will also be able to take an on-line appointment in case you need to request a visa. You can also call to take an appointment at 1-900-451-2778, but there are fees of 1, 89\$ CAN per minute. The mention "One entry only" doesn't apply for the USA for a short visit.

You will only need a valid passport and a student visa.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

- Host family
- School
- Local Chapter
- AFS Interculture Canada
- Authorizations required

Procedures

- Trips without the host family, the school or AFS are not authorized before January.
- The request must be submitted to AFS Interculture Canada at least 3 weeks prior to the trip.
- The student must ABSOLUTELY obtain the authorization of his host family and the local chapter (or AFS Interculture Canada if there is no chapter).
- The host parents must obtain the authorization of the school if the participant is to miss days of school.
- The host family must make sure the place the student intends to visit is safe and clean.
- The student has to fill out the authorization travel request, must sign it, clearly detail his plans and give it to the local chapter.
- The request will be submitted to AFS Interculture Canada who will approve the trip or not.
- If the trip is accepted, AFS Interculture Canada will contact the sending partner to obtain the authorization of the natural family. They will have to sign a document.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

- Should a participant travel without complying with the AFS Interculture Canada policy, the action can be considered grounds for an early return to the home country. Also, the student would not be covered by AFS insurances.
- Travel must never interfere with attendance at compulsory AFS events.
- Travel must not interfere with host family plans to pursue activities with a participant, especially holiday plans.
- Missing school should be exceptional. School attendance is vital as students are registered on a full-time basis. In case of missing school, the host parents must advise the school and get an approval. Student should not miss more than 10 days of school to travel.

VISIT OF THE NATURAL FAMILIES

The AFS Participation Agreement, which is signed by all AFS Participants and their natural parents, states, Many years of experience have taught AFS that a visit by relatives and friends can negatively impact the participant's experience. "We understand that AFS does not encourage visits from family members or friends during the AFS program. If family or friends plan to visit the participant, we agree to obtain consent in advance from the AFS national office in the hosting country. We also agree to abide by the hosting country regulations regarding the timing and duration of the visit. We understand that the AFS host country and or Host Family are not required to consent to a visit. In addition, we agree not to make any lodging or other impositions on the host family during the visit."

Visits from natural family or friends from home are often not the good idea one envisions. Through 60 of experience, AFS Volunteers, participants, and host families have learned that natural family visits are disruptive to the participant's exchange experience. For the participant, the arrival of someone from home interrupts integration into Canadian life, as relationships and cultural norms from home are resumed. For the hosts, it interrupts their role as parents, may confuse relationships, and imposes additional hospitality burdens. Visits take the focus from the participant and burden AFS Volunteer and Staff support structures. In keeping with the AFS standards and the participant adjustment cycle, AFS Interculture Canada highly discourages any visits during the program.

If the natural family insist, here are the rules to follow:

- Host family
- Local Chapter
- AFS Interculture Canada
- Authorizations required

Procedures

- The visit must be approved in advance by the host family, the local chapter and the AFS Interculture Canada office. AFS Canada recommends that approval from all three parties be confirmed prior to tickets being purchased.
- The request must be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the visit.
- The participant and the natural family must submit the details of the visit.
- Since visits can be disruptive to a participant's adjustment and adaptation, they should last no longer than 4 days.

- AFS Participants will be permitted to request approval for visits only between February and May (so no visit will be permitted until after they have been on the program for five months or are in the final month of their program).
- Participants will not be allowed to miss school to travel with their natural parents, other relatives or friends. AFS is an educational program and all schools in Canada offer several vacation periods.
- Natural family members should not plan to stay with the AFS Participant's host family, but rather are expected to arrange for their own hotel in the area.
- Natural family visits should not conflict host family plans or required AFS events and orientations.
- AFS Canada reserves the right to deny permission for a visit if a participant is having adjustment or other support problems at the time.
- If the student wants to travel with his natural family (without missing school), the trip must be approved like an independent trip. Please refer to the travel section to get the procedures.

EXTENDING YOUR STAY IN CANADA

Due to strict immigration rules and agreements, all students must absolutely go back home at the end of the program. AFS Interculture Canada doesn't authorize any extensions. The only possible option is if prior to your arrival in Canada, while you do the visa application, you could ask for an extension in order for you to travel with your natural parents in Canada after your year of study. But for some countries, it might be pretty difficult to do so. Also, you still need to have the approval of your host family, the local volunteers and AFS Canada and we will only allow it if the natural parents come to pick the student the very last day of the program in his host community. The student who would decide to quit the program before the end must also go back home immediately.

AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL - REQUEST

Note: this form has to be submitted to the Local Chapter for each trip

STUDENT NAME:

HOST FAMILY NAME:

ADDRESS:

ZIP: TELEPHONE:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANED TRIP AND JUSTIFICATION (Continue on the back if required):

.....
.....
.....

- Place visited:

.....
.....

- Dates:

- Itinerary:

.....
.....
.....

- Name of the person (adult) who will accompany the student (Continue on the back if required):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Student signature and date:

.....

AUTHORIZATION OF THE HOST PARENTS:

Signature and date:

.....

AUTHORIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHAPTER:

Signature and date:

.....

AFS INTERNATIONAL RULES

NO STUDENT MAY:

- Drive a motorized vehicle
- Hitchhike
- Take any form of non-prescribed drugs

AFS INTERCULTURE CANADA RULES

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

All AFS students must start and complete the school year according to the academic and disciplinary system of the respective high school. All have to attend school full time. AFS students cannot leave high school before the end of the school year. The AFS student has to participate in exams. In case a student does not attend school regularly, AFS Interculture Canada will decide whether or not to send the student home.

TRAVEL PERMISSION

- Traveling with the host family and school: traveling with the host family and the school is allowed as long as the procedures are respected
- Independent travel is not permitted
- Visit of the natural family: AFS Canada strongly discourages natural families to visit during the program. If they choose to come any, they must respect AFS Canada policy.
- Extending your stay in Canada: AFS Canada doesn't authorize any students to stay in Canada after the date of the program. All participants must go back to their home country unless they have a visa allowing them to stay longer and that their natural family come the very last day of the program to pick the student in his host community. You also need the approval of your host family, the local volunteers and AFS Interculture Canada.

Attendance at AFS orientation activities is compulsory: therefore, no travel which would interfere with attendance at these activities is permitted.

NO STUDENTS WILL BE AUTHORIZED BY AFS INTERCULTURE CANADA TO TRAVEL UNLESS THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

AFS INTERCULTURE CANADA RETAINS THE RIGHT TO AUTHORIZE OR DENY ANY TRAVEL PERMISSION.

After reading and understanding these AFS International and AFS Interculture Canada rules and responsibilities, I will respect them for the time I am in Canada. If I choose not to abide by these rules, I must respect whatever decision AFS Interculture Canada makes with regards to my position in Canada.

Name:

Country:

Signature:

Date:

Students will be asked to sign this contract on arrival in Canada.



NOTE TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

From: AFS Interculture Canada

Subject: Procedure for payment of medical expenses

AFS is an international non-profit organization that offers intercultural learning opportunities to youth. AFS is present in 80 countries around the world and is recognized by UNESCO. Just like medical professionals, our first priority is the health and safety of our participants.

In order to facilitate the required medical intervention and to ensure prompt payment for the services rendered, we ask you to follow the instructions below.

The person who has presented you with this letter is a participant of one of AFS' intercultural exchange programs. This individual is not a resident of Canada, but they are covered by our complete insurance program. You can confirm their participation in an AFS program by asking them to present their medical identity card with photo that we provide all of our participants.

AFS' insurance covers all costs except treatments for a pre-existing condition, dental and eye care, as well as esthetic surgeries.

In order to ensure payment for any charges we ask that you:

Make a copy of the participant's identity card and include it with the claim

Send the bill to the AFS Interculture Canada office

Attach a copy of the medical report, which includes the following information:

- Name of the patient
- Diagnosis and if possible prognosis
- Detailed report of the treatment given
- Physician's signature

Should you require further information you can contact our office, between the hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday or outside of office hours please contact the duty officer 24 hours a day at 514-575-5084.

This letter constitutes our commitment to paying with diligence for services rendered. We thank you for the attention and care which you are providing to our youth.

Sincerely, Anisara Creary Executive Director

MEDICAL REPORT FORM

Instructions: (Please make photocopies)

- Please type, or print legibly.
- If medical care is required over a length of time, completed forms should be sent to AFS Interculture Canada immediately upon each treatment.
- All other reports should be sent as promptly as possible. This will result in prompt payment.

To be completed by a Physician:

1. Name of the patient:
2. Home Country:
3. Diagnosis of illness or accident:
.....
.....
.....
4. Dates of illness or accident:
Start: Final treatment:
5. Brief description of medical treatment (consultation, examination, laboratory test, medication, etc.) Please attach a written report if available.
.....
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.....
.....
6. Date(s) of medical treatment(s):
.....
.....
7. Signature of attending physician:
.....
8. Address:
.....
.....
.....
9. Date:
.....

Send this form and all relevant bills, receipts and reports to:
AFS Interculture Canada
1425, René-Lévesque West, Suite 1100 Montreal (QC) H3G 1T7

Reimbursement cheque made out to:
Amount Due: