

# Changes to Hosting Realities (COVID-19 Edition)

*AFS Intercultural Programs Philippines - February 2021*

In response to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), please be guided by the following travel guidelines and restrictions. Please note that the information provided may change.

## **Arrival Information**

As early as 3 days prior to your arrival, you must register and fill out an electronic case investigation form (e-CIF) on the Philippine Red Cross or your respective airlines website ([ecif.redcross.com.ph](http://ecif.redcross.com.ph)). Your registration is completed once you receive an email containing a QR Code. The new system aims to fast track mandatory health protocols upon arrival at the airport.

The following are the step-by-step procedures in accomplishing the e-CIF:

1. Open the internet browser and go to [ecif.redcross.com.ph](http://ecif.redcross.com.ph)
2. Fill out the form then click Submit
3. Save the QR Code in your mobile phones or tablets by taking a screenshot or printing out a copy of the QR Code
4. Present the QR Code upon Health Assessment for the RT-PCR Testing for COVID-19 at the airport

In addition to the e-CIF and starting November 28, 2020, the Philippine Department of Transportation has mandated the use of the Traze Mobile Application to generate and scan their QR code when entering in, boarding from, and upon arriving in all Philippine Airports. To download, you may visit [traze.ph](http://traze.ph).

All arriving passengers are required to undergo government mandated RT-PCR (swab) testing procedures and you can expect to be in the terminal for around 3 hours. The test costs approximately a minimum of Php 4,000 (\$80) and subject to change without prior notice. You may opt to pay in cash (PHP or USD) or credit/debit card. ATMs are available inside the terminal. Please do note that even if participants already have a negative test result before boarding the plane in their home/sending country, they will still be subjected to a mandatory swab testing in the airport upon arrival in the Philippines.

After procedures at the airport, the participant will be subjected to the mandatory 14-day quarantine at a facility/hotel that must be accredited by the Department of Health-Bureau of Quarantine (DOH-BOQ). Note that all arriving students must present a pre-booked accommodation for at least 7-nights in an accredited hotel/quarantine facility at the Immigration counters for initial check. Those who fail to present a pre-booked accommodation shall be denied entry and shall be boarded immediately in the next available flight.

## **During Quarantine**

- AFS Philippines Staff will only be monitoring the students/participants virtually during this period. AFS Philippines will assist in arranging an accommodation for quarantine depending on availability. (i.e. Nichols Airport Hotel -- a partner hotel of AFS Philippines)
- Guests are strictly prohibited from leaving their rooms during quarantine. The hotel staff will leave food and drinks outside the door.
- Food deliveries are allowed, but participants should make sure these are already paid for. You may use phone applications such as Grab, Lalafood, and Food Panda for food deliveries. Again, the hotel staff would just bring the delivered items outside the door.
- While in quarantine, wait for the Philippine Red Cross to email the results of the swab tests taken at the airport. Test results are released after 5 to 7 days. You may also check the website and type your barcode and passport numbers to check your result.
- Foreigners are advised to complete the 14-day quarantine with negative RT-PCR (swab) results before leaving the hotel. *The timing on the release of test results are not definite and may either be shortened or extended. Your accommodation and food during your stay, including fees due to necessary extensions, will be at your own expense.*

## **Travel to the Hotel**

After completing the required swab testing at the airport, our partner hotel staff will be waiting for the participants at the arrival area holding a sign board with AFS and the participant's name written. AFS Philippines will be in close communication with the hotel receptionists to aid a smoother check-in for the participants.

## **Travel to Host Community and Host Family**

- If results come back positive, someone from the government will contact you and bring you to another facility for isolation and further medical management. AFS Philippines will be in touch with our participants and government officials pertaining to the isolation and medical management.

- If the test result is negative, you may obtain your BOQ medical certificate via the DOH-BOQ Certificate Page using the QR code provided to you before leaving the airport and traveling to your host community. For a hard copy of your certificate, printing services will be available at your hotel.
- Once cleared, AFS Philippines will contact your host family to pick you up and bring you home.  
*Depending on your host community's protocol, additional quarantine in a hotel or local government facility and swab testing may be required. Participants are responsible for any costs associated with these protocols. Hotel costs in the local community may vary but would probably cost around 50 USD a night and swab testing would probably range from P4,000 (80 USD) to P12,000 (240 USD) depending on the facility.*
- Once at home, you are still advised to complete or undergo another 14-day quarantine/self-isolation. This mandate might change depending on LGU's protocol and swab test result.

*Non-Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), students, exchange visa participants and returning residents must shoulder all expenses for quarantines and required RT-PCR Test for CoVID-19 upon arrival in Metro Manila and/or local communities outside Metro Manila.*

## **Arrival Orientations and other AFS Philippines Support**

As mentioned above, during the 14-day quarantine period at designated hotels, AFS Philippines will take advantage of this opportunity to facilitate the arrival orientation and expectation setting of the participants.

Few reminders for the participants that we strongly encourage;

1. Always observe the room assignments.
2. No transferring of rooms and visiting other participants is not allowed.
3. Be punctual during the virtual orientation. This is harder to do on-line so we expect more cooperation from the participants.

AFS Philippines will facilitate the following activities/topics based on the AFS Student Learning Journey;

1. Getting-to-know-you
2. AFS & You
3. Building Intercultural Friendships
4. Life in a Bahay Kubo: Facts about the Philippines
5. Personal Safety and Well-being
6. Personal Motivation

Additional topics include;

1. Tips on building stronger relationships with your Filipino Family/Friends
2. Introduction of Communities and Support Volunteers
3. Introduction of Schools and its Rules and Regulations
4. Virtual Cultural Activity Night

Monthly Contact with Support Volunteers and AFS Philippines will be conducted via Zoom and in-person;

1. AFS Philippines will conduct an assessment and evaluation for both participants and support volunteers via Zoom once a month.
2. Participants, Host Families, and Support Volunteers are expected to meet twice a month in-person and once through a virtual set-up. As practiced, meetings with participants and host families will be conducted separately.

*Note: To ensure safety of all stakeholders (participants, host families, support volunteers, and school administrators), it is important that in-person meetings must strictly follow physical distancing and other health standard protocols set by the Department of Health.*

## **Other Things to Consider**

1. Students and participants are highly encouraged to bring personal laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones that are Wi-Fi capable.
2. Local sim cards may be purchased at the Arrivals area inside the airport. Phone numbers of AFS PHI staff are under Globe and Smart Telecom, we advise that participants either get a sim card/ phone number (prepaid) under Globe or Smart Telecom which would probably cost around 50 pesos to 100 pesos (1-2 USD)
3. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport is equipped with free Wi-Fi. Participants can message us regarding any concern through WhatsApp, Viber, or iMessage in this number --- +63 998 968 6434 (Rex Relova; rex.relova@afs.org)
4. Upon arrival, participants are encouraged to secure their Philippine Pesos. Foreign Exchange counters may be found inside the airport. Some hotels may have currency exchange, but might not be available all the time.
5. The Philippines is a tropical country where there are only dry and wet seasons. Heavy winter jackets are not necessary.