



USEFUL HINTS SAFETY TIPS TRAVEL POLICIES

USEFUL HINTS FOR ARRIVING AFSers

On ARRIVAL: Upon arrival at Ezeiza Airport, students will pick up their baggage and go through customs. All international flights will be met by AFS travel staff members and volunteers immediately outside the customs area. Our staff and volunteers will be wearing bright red or Orange t-shirts with "AFS" appearing on the front and back and/or carrying yellow "AFS" signs so they are easy to see. Travel staff will sort the students into groups depending upon where they are going within the Argentina or Uruguay.

Travel to Sites: Students will be traveling to 50 different host distribution sites around Argentina or Uruguay. Transportation to the site will depend on the location of the chapter. All students will either fly, take a ferry or take some form of ground transportation. Local volunteers and host families will be waiting for the students at the bus or ferry terminal or domestic airport.

Overnights: In some cases, we will not be able to get students to their chapters on the same day that they arrive in the Argentina. Students will stay at facility and will be chaperoned by AFS Staff and volunteers.

If their flight arrives too late to make a connection to their domestic flight, students may overnight at the facility so they can depart on a charter bus the next morning.

Orientation: AFS ARG & URU has arranged a survival orientation that will take place at local level one week after your arrival. Students will usually spend 1 day at the orientation. The content covered at the Survival Orientation is very basic "survival" information dealing with the local AFS support structure, local contacts and upcoming orientation schedules, expectations for the exchange experience and a preview of their first days in Argentina or Uruguay. This orientation is followed up by a detailed orientation weekend that takes place 3 - 6 weeks after arrival at local level.

AFS students usually bring credit cards or traveler checks. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diners are the most popular international credit cards. Traveler checks are not advisable if you are not going to be hosted in Buenos Aires city, Córdoba city, Rosario or Montevideo.

Traveler checks are difficult to cash and the banks usually take a high commission out of them. If you bring cash, please do change your money to American dollars since it will be easier to exchange them for pesos. You will not need money for the first days in Argentina and Uruguay so please bring very small change for personal needs.

February is very hot in Argentina & Uruguay. Be sure to bring shorts and t-shirts for the summer days.

Winter (July/August) is very cold, especially in the southern region. Please bring warm jackets and pants. Gloves, hats and warm socks are also necessary.

We suggest that you get in touch with your host family as soon as you receive information about them. This will help to your future adaptation and to “break the

ice”. You can contact them by e-mail if they have an address or by sending a regular mail letter. If you choose to call them, please keep their language skills in mind.

Please do start your language training as soon as possible. Try to get some Spanish language audio to get used to the sounds of our beautiful language. A basic knowledge of Spanish will help you to have a much better start in Argentina or Uruguay.

Please bring along some pictures, slides or any other material about your country so that you can share your background with your host family, friends, volunteers in your area, host school, etc. Music instruments and typical costumes are always welcome (especially since there will be a Talent Show during the Arrival Orientation).

*Your natural family **should not send couriers** to you while you are in Argentina. The packages do not arrive at the final destination, but get stuck in Customs in Buenos Aires city. It is extremely expensive to release them, and you will have to come to Buenos Aires in order to do so.*

Even if the courier companies advertise they deliver anywhere in Argentina, national regulations delay this sort of packages in Customs and force the addressee to pay high amounts to retrieve them.

Our recommendation is for your family to use Ground Mail Services and send small packages only. Please advice your family not to include electronic devices, medicine or fresh food on the packages.

TIPS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

During the exchange program, students encounter new and different situations. However beneficial this may be in some aspects, in others it may entail distressing or even dangerous consequences if students are left to cope with them on their own. For this reason, AFS has devised a program support system for all participants which provides a safety net, namely, a consistently supportive environment that allows participants to ask questions and obtain advice and help at any time.

It is unlikely to anticipate all possible situations where individual safety is involved nor to supply all possible answers. Many issues are specific to individual countries or regions. In general, AFS recommends that students consult with the host family, AFS local chapter members or school teachers regarding information provided in this guide and pose any questions they may have concerning specific personal issues.

As in many other countries, there are personal security problems in Argentina & Uruguay. These problems vary from town to town. Students can be placed in big cities where families live in condominiums with security personnel, in medium-sized cities where people are not used to keeping their doors locked or in rural areas where these matters are not even considered as problems.

We strongly encourage all exchange students to discuss the personal safety subject with host families and AFS volunteers upon arrival.

Students are also encouraged to follow the recommendations provided in this guide in order to have a safer and happier stay in Argentina & Uruguay.

TIPS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY IN AND AROUND HOME

Your host family does not know what you are worried about, and needs you to tell them about your worries.

AFS encourages you to ask your host family about the safety measures in their home. They will usually explain to you how to make a telephone call, but might not realize that you may be concerned about how to answer the telephone, especially if you are not comfortable using the host country language and are not familiar with people who may be calling. You should ask your host family about these issues.

In and around the home, AFS Argentina & Uruguay advises you as follows:

- Keep the doors of the house locked at all times. If you are alone, please make sure the door is locked (and chained if possible).
- Never open the door to strangers, unless your family informs you that someone (relative or friend) is coming.
- Ask your host family what to do when a stranger comes to your home and you are alone. For example, whether or not you should answer the intercom or receive deliveries. If the answer is affirmative ask them how to proceed.

- If someone is at the door, always be sure to check who is there by looking through the peephole (*mirilla*) or talking on the intercom before opening the door. If you are unable to understand what that person is saying or you are not sure who it is, ask them to come back later.
- If your host family gives you their house key (*llave*), you should be careful not to lose it. Ask your host family whether you need to lock the doors and windows when you go out or at night, and when and how to lock them; be sure to follow their instructions correctly.
- Ask your host family what you should do in the case of your losing the house keys and finding the house locked. Ask them where you should go and who you should call.
- If you are out of the house and decide to come back earlier than the time agreed upon, make sure you call them first so they can expect your arrival.
- It is important to know who you should contact in case there is a problem when you are alone at home.
- Ask your host family if you are allowed to give the home phone number to your friends, and ask them if they have rules about this issue.
- It is a good idea to have a list of emergency phone numbers near the telephone and in your personal phonebook (*agenda*).

- It is good to know if your host family has a first aid kit at home and if so, ask them where it is.
- Do not give your address or any other family information to strangers over the phone. Suspicious calls or calls that you do not understand should be kept as short as possible.
- Ask your host family who you can safely give personal information to. Never indicate you are alone at home if you do not know who you are talking to.
- Ask your host family how emergency situations should be handled when you are alone (fire = *fuego, incendio*, power black out = *corte de luz*, natural gas leakage = *escape de gas*, etc.).
- Ask your host family how safe the neighborhood is, and if you can be outside the house late at night.

TIPS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY OUTSIDE THE HOME

- AFS recommends you to let your host parents know whenever you are concerned or frightened. Ask them what they suggest to help you feel safer.
- When you are going out, *AFS strongly recommends that you tell your host family or leave a note saying where you are going, who with, what are you going to do and when you will return home. If possible, leave the telephone number where you*

can be reached. Remember that your host family knows the neighborhood and the community and they are ready to give you advice about places that it would be better for you to avoid and about which is the best way to get around. Please take their advice seriously and follow their recommendations.

- In most Argentinean & Uruguayan cities and towns, the main public transportation consists in medium size buses (*omnibus, colectivos*). Only Buenos Aires city has a metro subway system (*subte*), and an urban train system. In any case, you should be aware of pickpocketers especially active at rush hours to steal.
- There are usually no public toilets in Argentinean & Uruguayan cities. If necessary, you should go to toilets in Department Stores (*negocios*), Restaurants and Hotels.

To avoid unpleasant situations away from home, AFS Argentina & Uruguay recommends the following:

- When friends or classmates invite you out, you should obtain permission from your host family before agreeing to go anywhere. Remember to ask your family if there is any risk related to the place where you are going.
- If possible call your host family as soon as you arrive at your destination so that they will not worry.

- Most Argentinean & Uruguayan families set a curfew (*horario para estar en casa*) for their children. If your host family does not set a curfew for you, please ask them what time they expect you to be back home. All families, even those who don't set a curfew, expect their children to come home early at night, before dusk. Don't violate your curfew.
- There are no curfews set by authorities in Argentina & Uruguay. Young people are allowed to be in the streets late at night. For this reason, we strongly recommend you to ask your host family about the time they want you to be back home. Also, host family will probably expect that you be accompanied with someone else in the event you are outside the house late at night. Expect specific host family rules about this and please follow them.
- It is a good idea that you carry a photocopy of your passport (*pasaporte*) in your purse (*cartera*) or wallet (*billetera*) at all times, as well as the AFS ID that AFS Argentina & Uruguay will provide you on arrival. Ask your host parents for a safe place to keep your passport at home.
- In some cities, students under 18 years old are not allowed to attend pubs or discotheques. Police are authorized to take you to jail until an adult picks you up. AFS Argentina & Uruguay strongly suggests that you ask your host family about the pubs (*bar, confitería*) and discos (*boliche*). The policies vary from town to town and are different in each province.

- Dinner (*cena*) time in Argentina & Uruguay is very late (compared to other countries). It is from 8 PM to 10:30 PM and it also varies from home to home. This makes it possible for kids to stay out late. Please make sure to ask your host family what is their way about this.
- When you go out, sometimes your host parents will like to pick you up when you want to come back home. Or, you can take a ride with AFS volunteers or family friends. Taking street taxis (*taxis, remis*) at night is not convenient, unless you are with a group of people or the taxi belongs to a private company that your host family knows.
- Do not take a ride with school classmates, since they won't probably have a proper ID to drive. Driver licenses (*registros de conducir*) are only given to 18-year-old people or older. When you are offered a ride, only accept if you know the person and if he/she has a proper driver license at hand.
- It is not advisable to take public transportation late at night.
- Try not to walk in the streets after dark. Even during daylight try to walk along with other people. Avoid empty streets.
- Try to carry your back pack (*mochila*) in the front. Pay attention to your wallet, purse and other valuable belongings while walking in crowded streets.

- Do not give your telephone number or address to strangers who approach you in the street, bus, train or subway. Even if someone seems friendly and trustworthy you have no idea what kind of person they are. Also, do not pay attention to any sales talk while walking through the streets.
- If you go down town (*centro*) or to crowded places do not wear valuable jewelry, expensive watches or fancy sun glasses.
- Like in most cities in the world, there are some areas considered unsafe, especially after dark. As said before, ask your host family, liaison and local AFS volunteers to teach you where the dangerous areas in the city are, and how local people avoid or deal with dangerous situations.
- Buy a telephone card (*tarjeta telefónica*) and always have some cash with you. This is in case you need to use public phones (you can find them either in the streets, kiosks or at special places called *locutorios*) either for an emergency (also to call your family if you are lost).
- Never ask or accept rides from strangers. Never hitchhike (*hacer dedo*). This is a must for boys and girls.
- Be careful when you cross the streets, especially in big cities. Sometimes drivers don't stop at red lights (especially at night). Pay special attention when the streets don't have pedestrian crossing.
- Ask your host family which are the areas where you can ride a bicycle (*bicicleta*).

- Never carry a lot of money (*plata, dinero*) with you. You should have only what you need for the day.
- Ask your host family or AFS local representatives for advice regarding high school social culture. Most educational institutions have a Principal (*rector, director*) a Vice Principal and Guidance Counselors (*celadores, preceptores*).
- Usually, there is no drug dealing at Argentinean & Uruguayan high schools. However, if someone offers you drugs (*drogas*) at school **say NO**. If a person insists on offering you drugs ask your host parents or counselor for advice.
- If you meet students who are breaking the school rules regarding drugs, smoking, drinking alcohol or not attending classes, please keep away from them. AFS will consider an Early Return situation if you are expelled from High School.
- Do not leave the school until classes are over.

ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- It is illegal to consume drugs in Argentina & Uruguay. Never take or accept drugs if someone offers them to you. The legal system establishes severe penalties for drug consumption or possession, which might include going to jail or attending a rehabilitation center compulsorily for a certain period of time.
- According to the Participation Agreement "AFS has the right to terminate an individual's participation and return the individual to the home country for violation of provisions of the terms of the contract... for example a participant's use or involvement with drugs for non-medicinal purposes is cause for an early return..."
- It is important that you understand that involvement not only means actually using drugs, but also having drug paraphernalia in personal possession, frequenting places where drugs are used or knowingly associating with persons using these substances, etc.

- Please remember: it is forbidden for all AFS students to consume drugs not prescribed for medical purposes. Violation of this rule is a cause for dismissal from the AFS program and an immediate Early Return.
- In Argentina & Uruguay, the legal age for buying alcoholic beverages and drinking in public is 18. The police are legally authorized to take drunken teenagers to jail. Parents and AFS Argentina & Uruguay will expect you not to drink alcohol when you go out/not to get drunk.
- Getting drunk is not accepted by our society and therefore AFS students who get drunk deeply affect the AFS image at local level.
- Keep in mind that excessive alcohol consumption in Argentina & Uruguay could be considered as a reason for an Early Return.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practice. Often, clarifying attitudes may be necessary, and again, the advice of people you know and trust is very valuable. Knowledge about people you socialize with is very important, and this is best through acquiring more information about the beliefs regarding sexual behavior.
- In societies where some young people are sexually active, there are also many who are not.
- In some situations, you may be unsure if you are being sexually harassed or not. An important resource is your own instinct. Your siblings, host parents, counselor or friends will be able to advise you about the sexual behavior of people you don't know, and about cultural differences. You can also seek for advice from teachers at school, AFS volunteers and AFS National Office.

- You should be aware of the possibility of sexual harassment in crowded buses or walking alone in some areas. The person may say rude words or lewd things or attempt to touch you. If it happens, try to get away, and shout for help (AUXILIO). You may also try to call the attention of other people, passers by or policemen.
- In the event of a physical attack, please call the police station, your host family and / or any AFS volunteer.
- In the event of a sexual attack, please tell your host parents what has happened. They will immediately contact the AFS local chapter coordinator or other representatives who will assist you in reporting the situation to the local police authorities and will take you to a doctor. AFS Argentina & Uruguay's national office will be notified and will tell your host family what to do next.

In case of personal emergencies, please call the following phone numbers in the following order (you will be given the numbers when you arrive):

- Your host family.
- Your local AFS representatives.

Important emergency (emergencia) phone numbers:

Please ask your host family for the following local phone numbers and keep them in your personal phone book: Neighborhood Police Station (Comisaría del barrio), Municipal Police Station (Policía Municipal), Fire Department (Bomberos), Hospital or family doctor (Hospital o Médico de la familia).

NATURAL DISASTERS, RIOTS, EARTHQUAKES

In any of these cases, do what your host family or AFS local representatives indicate. AFS Argentina & Uruguay's national office will contact you at your host family's house or school in order to be sure that you are safe, and will send a report to your sending country's national office.

TRAVEL POLICIES

GENERAL RULES

The local contact person called “consejero” is responsible for monitoring EVERY trip students wish to take part of (to grant or to deny permission, to arrange the proper authorizations, to get all the necessary information, etc.). If for any reason the “consejero” is not available of doing so, then the local president shall be the responsible one.

The “consejero” and/or the local President are responsible for communicating this travel policies to the foreign student and his/her host family.

Trips must not interfere neither with AFS compulsory activities, either regional or national, nor with the normal direction of the experience (family activities, school attendance, etc.).

South hemisphere students (arriving in February) shall be able to take part of independent trips according to the following schedule:

- *Yearly Program: after July*
- *Semestral Program: after May*

North Hemisphere students (arriving in August) shall be able to take part of independent trips according to the following schedule:

- *Yearly Program: after December*
- *Semestral Program: after October*

Each trip that the student takes part of must follow the following security rules:

- a) *The “consejero” or local chapter President must have the addresses and telephone numbers of the places where the student shall stay along the trip, means of transport to be used, the waybill and dates of travel, and pass on this information by e-mail to the National Office at the moment of the authorization.*
- b) *In case a bus, van, or car hired by AFS (Local chapter volunteer or National Office) is used for traveling or the travel is made through commercial lines, the “consejero” or the local President chapter must be assured that the transport is under all the regulations (authorization, insurance, up to date vehicle license, first aids kit, security measures, emergency exit easily identified, fire extinguisher, auxiliary*

wheels, mobile phone to be used in case of emergency, address and telephone number of hospitals/medical centre with emergency services clearly identified in the waybill).

c) Daylight trips shall be of priority, with stops to rest at night. This is because it has been statistically proved that risks are higher at night.

- The student cannot travel to his country of origin unless all the authorizations required by the organization are fulfilled.

- For Independent trips (non AFS National Office, non own host AFS Chapter, non hostfamily nor hostschool related) the Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) signed by natural parents should be requested by the counselor to the AFS Argentina & Uruguay National Office at least 15 days in advance.

- AFS National Office, in agreement with the “consejero” and the Local Chapter President, can deny the permission for a trip if the integrity of the student is considered to be jeopardized or that the trip may interfere with the normal course of the experience.

SPECIFIC RULES

1) **Student’s travels with the host family (host family includes parents and/or siblings over 18 years old):**

- Unlimited regarding number of times and days (*).

- Every trip during school time shall require a permission from the host school and the Local Chapter.

- The Host family should send a written report to the student’s “consejero” with the address, telephone numbers, means of transport, waybill and dates, in case they may be contacted for an emergency.

- In case the trip includes somewhere outside Argentina or Uruguay (whichever country student is placed in), the National Office shall require an especial authorization from the student’s natural parents.

(*) In case host family travels too much, the “consejero” is responsible for reminding the host family about the travel policies and the need to accord to the AFS program objectives.

2) Student traveling with the host school:

- Unlimited (number of times and days-wise)
- The student's "consejero" must be informed about dates, address, telephone number and name of the teacher or any other adult in charge to be able to contact him/her.
- The "Consejero" must verify that all the security measures are fulfilled (see General rules).
- The student shall need the permission of the host family.

3) Student traveling with other organizations or institutions:

- The AFS National Office shall require a Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) to be signed by natural parents.
- Limited to one (1) trip up to seven (7) days within the AFS year or semester.
- A written Permission from the host family, the host school and the "Consejero" is required. Trip shall not be authorized if any of these permissions is missing.

- The "Consejero" must be informed about the person in charge of the group during the trip, contact address/phone, and dates of departure and return.

- The "Consejero" must verify that the security measures are fulfilled (see General Rules).

4) Student traveling with neither than those above mentioned nor the "Consejero" nor the AFS volunteers :

- The AFS Argentina & Uruguay National Office shall require a Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) to be signed by natural parents.
- They are limited to 5 (five) days in total within the AFS year or semester program.
- The "Consejero" must verify that all the security measures are fulfilled (see General rules).
- The permission (written) from the host family, the host school and the "Consejero" is required. Trip shall not be authorized if any of these permission is missing.
- The student must travel with someone older than 18 years old.

5) Student traveling alone to visit friends, family friends or relatives (host and/or natural ones):

- The AFS Argentina & Uruguay National Office shall require a Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) document to be signed by natural parents while the trip is taking place.
- They are limited to 1 (one) trip, up to 5 (five) days, during school holidays.
- The “Consejero” must verify that all the security measures are taken (see General rules).
- A written permission from the host family, the host school and the “consejero” is required. The Trip shall not be authorized if any of these permissions is missing.

6) Student traveling alone to visit other AFS students:

- AFS National Office shall require that Natural Parents sign the Temporary Program Release (Program Waiver) before trip take place.
- Limited to 1 trip, up to 5 days, during school holidays.
- The local contact person must verify that all the security measures are taken/fulfilled (see General rules).

- Written Permission of host family, host school and local contact person are required. Trip shall not be authorized if any of these permission is missing.

4) Student traveling with AFS (local chapters volunteers, Board Members, Nacional Office Staff):

- AFS trips are those which are organized either by the National Office (Orientations, End of stay) or by Local Chapters only for their hosted students.
- Trips organized by the National Office are compulsory. In case a student does not accomplish to this an early return to his/her country of origin could be considered.
- Trips organized by Local Chapter for their students (camps, visits to touristic, cultural or historic places, etc.) are unlimited but the “Consejero” must verify that security measures are taken (see General Rules) and properly informed in advanced to the host family and to the host school, in order to check that the development of the intercultural experience of all the students hosted in that chapter is regular so they can make the trip. Besides, the “Consejero” must pass on this information to the AFS National Office so the organization may be aware in case of emergency.

- Trips organized by the Local Chapter for their students where they invite students from different chapters must follow the following requirements:

a) Limited to 1 (one) trip. This trip should be up to 7 (seven) days, during school days and up to 15 (fifteen) days during school holidays. In case it is school time, host family and host school must be duly informed in advance in order to get the authorizations.

b) Trips must be arranged, at least, with 2 (two) months in advance.

c) The National Office must be informed in April of every year about the “open to other students trips” being organized by Local Chapters, in order to coordinate trips requirements at a National level.

d) The trip invitation to AFS students from other chapters, should only be delivered through the hosting chapter, which shall be responsible for authorizing the trip.

e) Students not being hosted by the trip organizer Chapter should not be informed directly about trip details. Trip organizer Chapter should not receive neither money nor confirmation directly from those students. Communication should be established only between volunteers.

f) The AFS Argentina & Uruguay National Office shall require to the students not being hosted by the trip organizer Chapter a Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) document to be signed by natural parents while the trip is taking place. The counselor is responsible for the student to be properly authorized by natural parents before initiating the trip.

g) South hemisphere students (arriving in February) shall be able to take part of these trips according to the following schedule:

- *Yearly Program: from July (winter holidays)*

- *Semestral Program: from June*

h) North Hemisphere students (arriving in August) shall be able to take part of these trips according to the following schedule:

- *Yearly Program: from January*

- *Semestral Program: from December*

- With every AFS trip, the “Consejero” or Chapter in charge of the organization must verify that security measures are taken (see General Rules).
- The AFS National Office shall require that Natural Parents sign the Temporary Program Release (Program Waiver) document *when a visit to another country is included in the trip.*
- The National Office can deny permission to these sort of trips if students and volunteers safety is jeopardized.
- The exchange student’ s unaccomplishment to this travel policy may mean an early return to his/her home country.