



Programas  
Interculturales

**BIENVENIDOS A  
ARGENTINA**

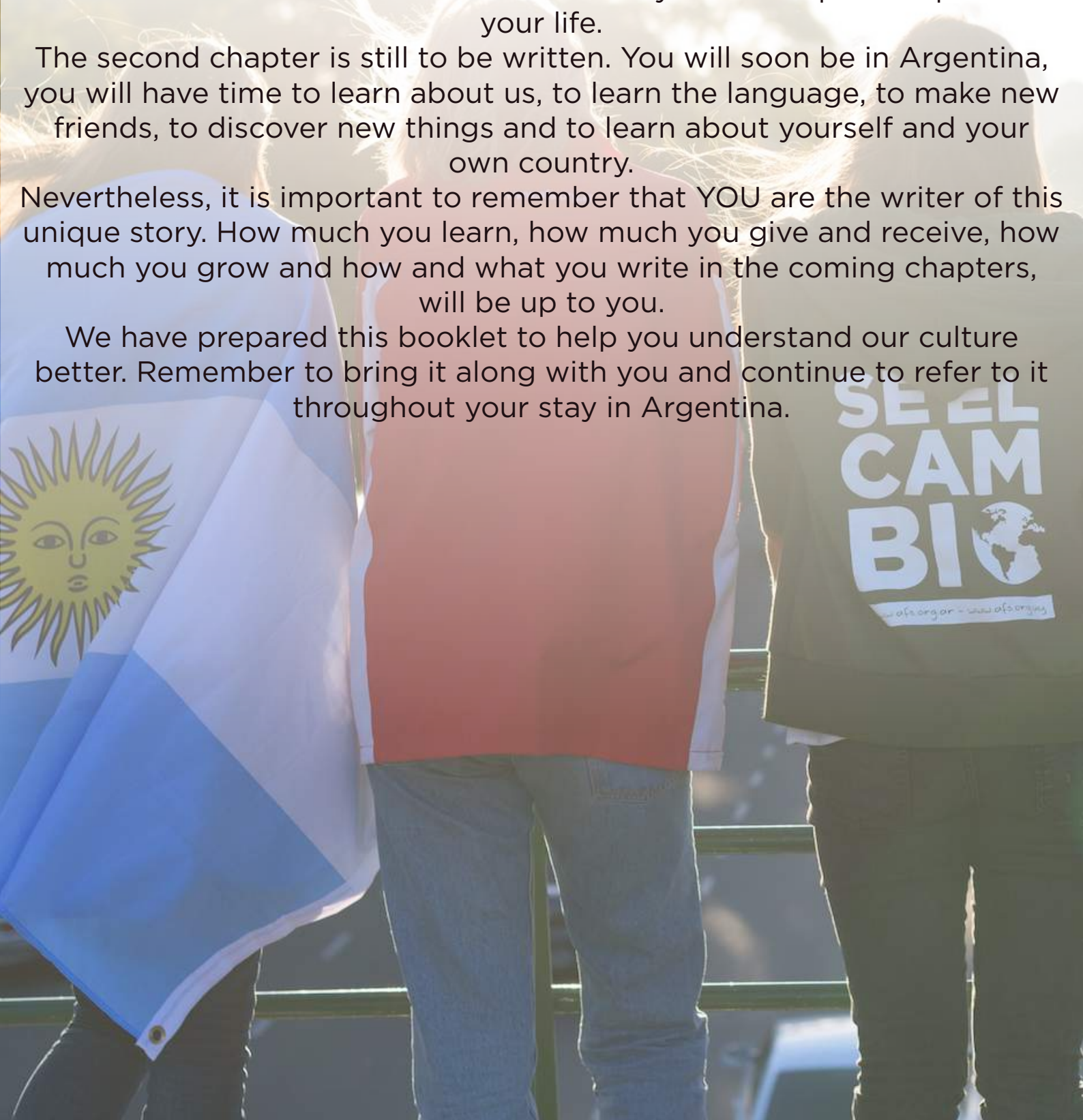
AFS Argentina is pleased to know you will be coming soon to our country and all of us (staff, volunteers, families and schools) are looking forward to meeting you.

You have decided to learn about the world by being an AFS student. AFS is something very special: it brings people together from different parts of the world and makes them belong to this new place. The first chapter of your AFS experience has already been written, you have already met new people in your country, shared experiences with them and made new friends who will always be an important part of your life.

The second chapter is still to be written. You will soon be in Argentina, you will have time to learn about us, to learn the language, to make new friends, to discover new things and to learn about yourself and your own country.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that YOU are the writer of this unique story. How much you learn, how much you give and receive, how much you grow and how and what you write in the coming chapters, will be up to you.

We have prepared this booklet to help you understand our culture better. Remember to bring it along with you and continue to refer to it throughout your stay in Argentina.



## INTRODUCTION

It is time to start thinking about life in Argentina. An adequate preparation is highly recommended and there are three areas in which pre-arrival knowledge is of great importance and help:



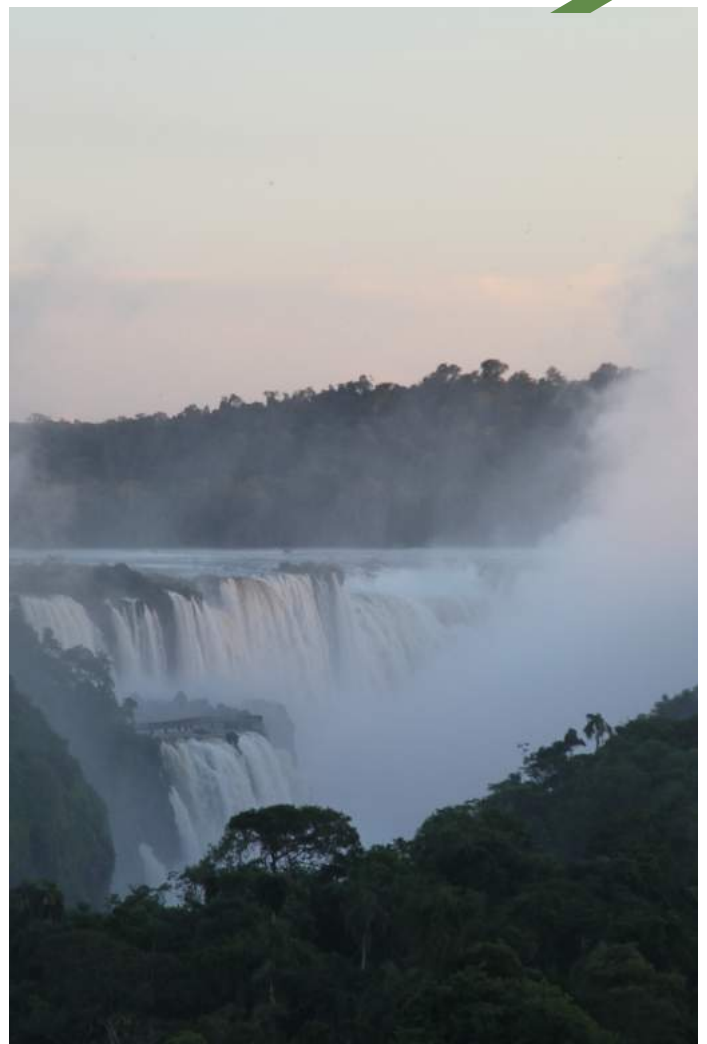
**Language**



**Argentina and your own home country**



**Attitude**





## Language

Many of you have some knowledge of Spanish, some of you have almost none. Whatever the case is, for all of you the language is of major importance and will need your immediate attention, and above all, dedication.

The time you have before you arrive in our country won't be enough to learn a new and different language. Nevertheless, it is plenty of time to learn words and small phrases which will be of help to make yourself understood.

**Don't wait until the last minute. Start now and work on it constantly.**

Your improvements may seem slow at first and at times you will think you'll never be able to follow a complete conversation in Spanish. Don't get discouraged! The more you practise the better it will get.

Your host family will be pleased with your efforts and you can always make vast use of pantomime and symbols!

### How can you help yourself in this learning process?

- ✓ Once in Argentina, try not to be in touch with people who speak your language.
- ✓ Take your dictionary with you everywhere you go.
- ✓ Ask your host family and friends to correct your grammar and pronunciation. They will be delighted to help you.
- ✓ Make notes of new words and phrases in order to memorize them.
- ✓ If you watch some series, do it in Spanish (not too much, though).
- ✓ Make an effort to read daily a couple of newspapers' articles. This will not only keep you updated but will also help you a lot in this process of learning the new language.
- ✓ Don't be ashamed of asking people to repeat what they say. They know you are learning and they will appreciate your efforts.
- ✓ Relax and laugh! Within a short period of time this specific chapter of your story will be one of the best.



## Knowledge of Argentina and your own home country



This booklet should help you and your natural parents to get some general information about our culture and customs. Of equal importance, however, in your preparation is that you have a fairly good knowledge of your own country, without doubt you will be asked many questions about it during your stay here.



## Attitude

Even more important, however, than information on Argentina and your home country and knowledge of Spanish, are a few basic attitudes we hope you will bring along with.

### MAKE AN EFFORT TO COME WITH REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ You will not be "on the go" all the time.
- ✓ Your experience will have ups and downs.
- ✓ You will not be treated as the "prince/princess" of the house for a long time.
- ✓ Your host family will be, at first, as confused as you are.
- ✓ It will take a lot of effort and patience on everybody's part to make this work.

### ACCEPT DIFFERENCES

When you come to Argentina you will find a lot of differences between our country and yours. It is unnecessary to ponder on whether things are better or worse. They are just different. Look, listen and think about the reasons but do not generalize - you will be staying with one family out of many and in one community out of many.

### SHOW APPRECIATION

Your host family, AFS local chapter and school are awaiting lovingly you and are ready to share their friendship. Show them that you are grateful. Frequent "muchas gracias" (thank you very much), a smile, your enthusiasm and interest in what they have to offer, are the keys. Your ongoing appreciation is necessary to build a lasting bond between you and your host family, friends and community.

## BE OPEN

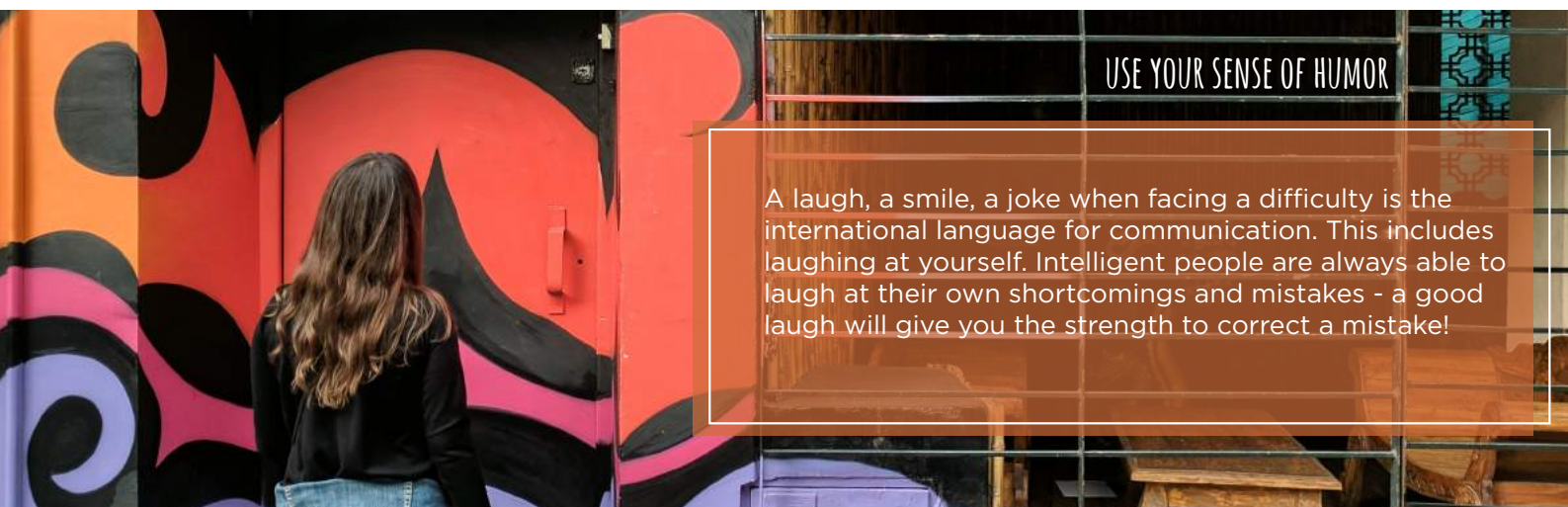
You are coming not only to let us know about you and your country, but also to learn about us. Listen and take in as much as you can. Do not hesitate to ask your family, friends and AFS people for advice whenever you need it and don't be afraid or ashamed to be corrected.

Ask them to tell you about your mistakes; encourage them to tell you what and how they feel; show them you appreciate their openness. There is much to learn.



## USE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR

A laugh, a smile, a joke when facing a difficulty is the international language for communication. This includes laughing at yourself. Intelligent people are always able to laugh at their own shortcomings and mistakes - a good laugh will give you the strength to correct a mistake!



## And last but not least...

We would like to share with you some piece of advise from former AFS students:

- Don't act like a tourist.
- If people are indifferent at first, be prepared to let them know about you and what brought you to Argentina.
- At the beginning, you will suddenly feel like a baby who does not know anything. You have to learn again how to behave and how to talk. Don't be angry. Ask for guidance.
- Ask for help. You will be amazed how quickly you'll be confident of yourself and your abilities again.
- Ask. Sometimes you feel like a child, not understanding, always asking questions. If you pretend you understand, you will make many unnecessary mistakes and miss many things.
- You will probably be looked upon as a person and as a representative of your country. In fact, some people may judge your country on the basis of your behaviour. We know you are perfectly able to leave a good impression.

### WEBS OF INTEREST

[www.argentina.com](http://www.argentina.com)

[www.turismo.gov.ar](http://www.turismo.gov.ar)

[www.geographia.com/argentina/](http://www.geographia.com/argentina/)

[www.afs.org.ar/](http://www.afs.org.ar/)

## Chapter I: Family

AFS host families are like families everywhere. Each one is different!

Your host family may have two parents or one parent, may have young children or teenagers or no children at all, parents may be middle aged or young or over 50, they may live in a city or a town or in the country and they may come originally from another country.

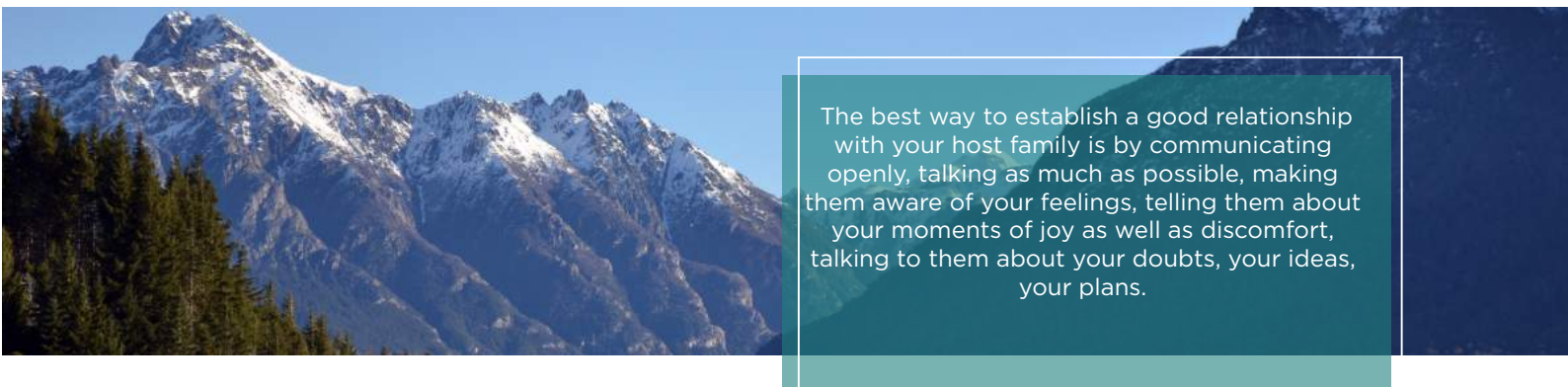
Argentina is a nation of immigrants and a considerable percentage of its population comes from many different places such as Italy, Spain, Germany, East Europe, Nordic countries, South East Asia, Middle East Asia, neighboring countries and many more.

As we said before, your host family will be different from any other family that any AFSer will be living with. It is just one of those things that will be "special" to you during your stay in Argentina. Each member has his/her own personality and together they form a unique group with its own personality, values and set of rules.

THERE ARE, NEVERTHELESS, SEVERAL THINGS WHICH ARE COMMON TO ALL ARGENTINE AFS HOST FAMILIES AND IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ALWAYS KEEP THEM IN MIND:

- ✓ Your host family is not paid for. It's a volunteer family and they receive no money for hosting you in their home.
- ✓ Your host family wants you to live with them. They want to learn about your country and they want to teach you about ours and about our way of life.
- ✓ Your host family wants to help you while you are in Argentina.
- ✓ Your host family wants you to be a true family member, which means you will share its work, responsibilities and happy moments. Follow family rules and take the family into account when you make plans.





The best way to establish a good relationship with your host family is by communicating openly, talking as much as possible, making them aware of your feelings, telling them about your moments of joy as well as discomfort, talking to them about your doubts, your ideas, your plans.

In this way the members of your family will feel the gratification of having succeeded in earning your trust and they will be encouraged to open up with you and further consolidate the relationship.

With regards to gratification, remember to show appreciation often in the best and simplest way: by saying “gracias” (thank you) and by showing sincere interest in their daily life.

### SOME SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS:

- ✓ Argentinian parents seem always to emphasize what their children don't do or what they do poorly. It is important that you realize that it may be somewhat normal for Argentinian siblings to be lectured.
- ✓ Always ask for permission before doing something.
- ✓ It is important that you remember that this attitude does not mean lack of trust or respect; on the contrary, in our culture it is always a sign of attention and, above all, affection and care.
- ✓ Family in Argentina is still a very close unit. Parental decisions are respected and followed and parents have the last word in disciplinary and other family matters. Children are not allowed to rule the family by their wishes.
- ✓ Parents expect their children to tell them about their plans: where they are planning to go, with whom and at what time they believe will be back home. Again, please remember, this does not mean lack of trust.
- ✓ It is common for many families to have grandparents living with them at their home. Respect and consideration for them are expected.
- ✓ Food in Argentina is said to be delicious especially when it comes to meat (asados - barbecues are great!). A common phenomenon among AFSers is gaining weight. If you dislike certain dishes, you'll find a way to express it tactfully. Don't leave the table before your parents do or without asking them for permission to do so. Dinner time is when the whole family gets together and parents expect their children to be home on time. Don't make your own plans to go out and eat with your friends without asking your host parents first and see if they don't mind.
- ✓ Meal times vary from family to family, but generally meals are eaten during the following hours:
  - Desayuno (beakfast) : between 7 and 8 a.m.
  - Almuerzo (lunch): between 12:30 and 2 p.m.
  - Cena (dinner): between 8 and 10 p.m.

- ✓ Most Argentine homes have only one bathroom, which means it is quite common to have "rush hours"! Try not to spend too much time in the bathroom at those hours.
- ✓ Often the hot water heater is turned on only when needed. Therefore you should ask your family when it is the best time to take a bath or a shower and how does the heater work.
- ✓ A daily shower (and at least two at summer time) is a must in Argentina.
- ✓ Towels may not be changed every day. Ask your family how this works in their home.
- ✓ Remember to clean the tub after you finish and to dry up the bathroom floor if you have gotten it wet.
- ✓ Ask your family about laundry (ropa sucia) habits. In most cases your Argentine family will suggest washing your laundry with those of other members of the family. In other cases you may be expected to do some of your own laundry.
- ✓ Please remember not to leave your dirty clothes spread all over the place!
- ✓ Argentine mothers consider bedrooms to be just like any other room in the house. Therefore they usually walk in without knocking or asking for permission. It is considered rude to close yourself inside unless it is to go to sleep.
- ✓ Remember to keep your room clean and tidy.

### AND NOW, SOME FINAL REMINDERS ABOUT GOOD MANNERS (BUENA EDUCACIÓN):

- ✓ Do not walk around in bare feet either in the house or outside.
- ✓ Do not put your feet up on chairs, couches, tables or public transportation seats
- ✓ Remember to exchange greetings with your family in the morning (buen día), before leaving the house (adiós) and before going to bed (buenas noches).
- ✓ Do not take friends home without consulting your family first.
- ✓ Do not be too critical; if you find differences between your culture and ours, try to understand these without immediately judging which is "better".

***Things are simply different;  
neither better nor worse.***



**Remember, your local AFS contact person will always be available if you need advice, clarifications or just a shoulder to cry on.**

## Chapter II: School

Arrangements have been made for you to attend school on a regular basis during your stay in Argentina.

AFS Argentina has signed several legal documents at the Immigration Department stating you will:

- ✓ attend school full time;
- ✓ do your school work and show progress;
- ✓ behave cooperatively in school.

**If you fail to do any one of these things, you will be reported by your school to AFS and in turn AFS will report to the government. Your visa will be cancelled and you will have to return home.**

Schools around the world have a lot in common: teachers, homework, exams, etc. They are a place where teenagers make friends, learn, share and prepare for life as an adult.

Because each country has its own history and culture and its own way of educating its young people, there are things that make schools in each country different.

Will you like school in Argentina? Yes, if you are ready for it to be different and willing to understand those differences; try not to be critical of them. If you do not like school at first, be patient and do not try to change it immediately. Remember that AFS and Host families have worked a lot to find a spot at a local school for you. Host Schools are willing to learn from you and your culture.

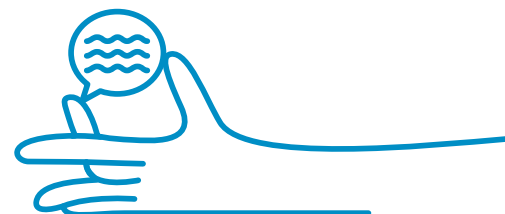


## HERE ARE A FEW FACTS INTENDED TO INTRODUCE YOU TO SCHOOL IN ARGENTINA:


- ✓ The school year period goes from mid March to early December.
- ✓ Winter vacation: 2 weeks in July (subject to change according to each province regulations).
- ✓ Students attend classes either in the morning or in the afternoon, not both.
- ✓ Extra curricular activities are almost non-existent in Argentine schools.
- ✓ Teachers are the ones who change rooms, not the students.
- ✓ Elementary school = 7 years / High school = 5 years.
- ✓ Elementary school education and the first 3 years of Secondary school are compulsory.
- ✓ Most AFS students attend public coeducational secondary schools and are registered either in 11th or 12th grade.
- ✓ An average of 11 subjects have to be taken every year. These subjects are compulsory for all students. Many of them might be new to you.
- ✓ Classes are quite crowded (compared to some other countries) with an average of 35 students per class.
- ✓ Most school buildings are old and not very well kept.

School can be really interesting. It is an opportunity to study subjects not available to you at home, including subjects that teach you about Argentina. It is a place to make friends. It is a place to talk and teach about your own country. It teaches you a lot about Argentina and Argentinians and will improve your Spanish.

AFS Argentina hopes you will find that there is a lot you can gain while attending school in our country. Your host school has opened its doors and it is waiting to welcome you and to learn from you.



## Chapter III: Social Life



Having friends and a social life are just as important in Argentina as in your country. Teenagers usually go out in groups, either boys and girls together or separately. They go to someone's home, to parties, to the movies, to cafés, etc.

You will find that night-life (on weekends) is an important part of Argentina's social life, especially when it comes to dancing or eating out; dancing does not start until after midnight and it goes on until 5 or 6 AM when teenagers leave the discos and go home.

Sounds attractive, doesn't it? But always remember to ask your parents for permission first and to let them know where and with whom you'll be going and which arrangements you set to come back home.

AFS Argentina will place you in a safe neighborhood and city but you may witness public protests. Please be alert and go home or school immediately if you find yourself in the middle of one of them. Also be careful with your belongings (cameras, iPod, wallet, purse, passport, etc.) as pickpocketing has increased in the last years.

# Chapter IV: AFS

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AFS ARGENTINA?

In Argentina, its full name is Asociación Civil AFS Programas Interculturales. It has a Board of Directors, 39 Local Chapters all over the country and a National Office in Buenos Aires city.

## WHAT IS A CHAPTER?

It is a group of people, like a club or committee, who do things together. These people may be former participants, their parents and friends or teachers and families who have hosted students in previous years.

They are volunteers, which means they are not paid for their work. They enjoy and believe in what AFS does.

## WHAT DOES A CHAPTER DO?

It does the work that makes AFS programs possible. For example, your chapter contacted your Argentine family and has arranged for you to attend school.

## WHAT WILL YOUR CHAPTER DO FOR YOU?

It will welcome you. It will give you and your hosts a Contact Person (Consejero) - a person to be an adviser - answer questions and help you as you adjust to living in Argentina. You will be asked to join its activities.

## WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITIES?

There are social gatherings, there are funds raising events, there are family finding campaigns, there are student recruitment events, when everyone works together. There are orientation sessions where you can talk about your experience and adaptation process.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR YOUR CHAPTER?

Be ready to join all its activities, even the ones that mean hard work!

Be ready to fulfil the AFS goals being a good representative of your country at school and at your host community.

## WHAT ABOUT THE AFS STAFF?

There are two offices, one in Buenos Aires (Arg) and the other in Montevideo (Uru). Their job is to offer leadership to volunteers and take final responsibility for AFS programs and participants; also to communicate and work with other AFS offices around the world.

The people you will know best in AFS are the volunteers in your chapter. You might meet members of the AFS office, but even if you don't, you can rest assured that they know who you are and will be there if needed.



## Chapter V: AFS Rules

You must not drive a car, truck, motorcycle or scooter; you may not fly on private planes while you are an AFS student.

This rule applies to driving anywhere, even on private property. You may not take driving or flying lessons in Argentina, even if you have the legal age to do it.

Drugs in Argentina are illegal. You will not be allowed to use them,

You may not hitch-hike while you are an AFS student in Argentina.

**If you break one of these rules,  
you will be sent home.**

### ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

- It is illegal to consume drugs in Argentina.

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, the legal age for buying alcoholic beverages and drinking in public is 18. The police is legally authorized to take drunken teenagers to jail. Parents and AFS Argentina will expect you not to get drunk when you go out.

- 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 could be considered as a reason for an Early Return.

So, please keep in mind that if AFS (host family, friends, volunteers, teachers, etc) finds you drunk you will be in trouble. The first time you will receive a warning and if you do it again the situation could be considered as an Early Return reason

## OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

### *About Smoking*

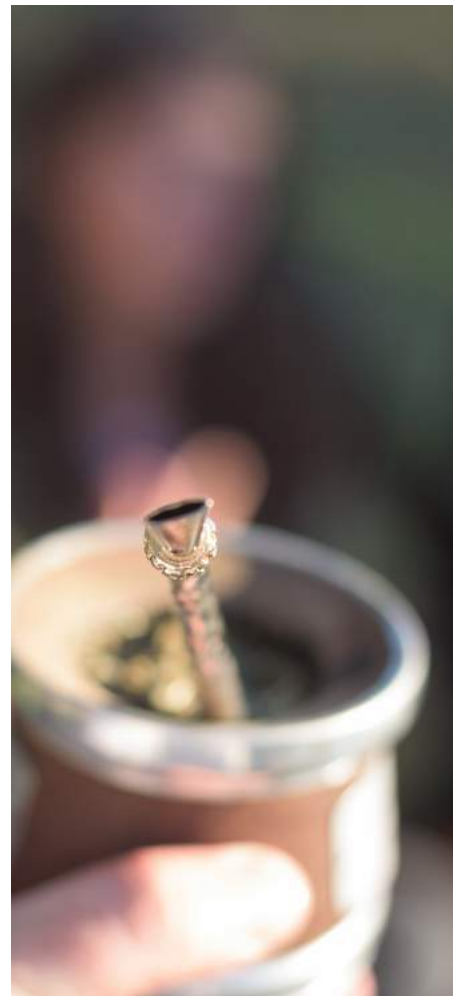
Many people have strong objections to it, but at the same time there are many people who are still smoking heavily.

If you smoke, you should tell your host family and ask for permission. You should not smoke in the house. Smoking is prohibited in government buildings, schools and on public transportation places.

### *About Travelling*

You will come here to study and to know the culture, which means that you are not going to be a tourist travelling around the country or Latin America.

Come to Argentina only if you want to make the most of being an AFS student, living as a member of the family and the community and going to school.



### Clothing

If you arrive in February, it will be during the summer and will be hot. You will need casual clothing, sandals, cardigans and a swimsuit.

In Winter (from June to September) the weather is cold. Most houses and schools do not have central heating, so you will need clothing to keep you warm indoors as well as outside. Keep in mind that Argentina is a large country, so, temperatures and weather will depend on the zone you live.

### Packages

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.

### Souvenirs

Bring things that will help you tell argentinians about your home, country and culture: pictures of your home and family, a map of your country, music, a national costume, recipes, a flag, brochures and picture books.

### Money

In Argentina the units of currency are PESOS and CENTAVOS. The exchange rate to American dollar varies. Please check for the current rate before coming.

If during your stay in Argentina you want to take special lessons, or a particular course or even go on a school trip, you will have to pay for it yourself.

You can bring money into Argentina from other countries by international credit cards. Traveler checks are not advisable if you are not going to be hosted in Buenos Aires city, Cordoba city, Rosario city.

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 so please bring very small change for personal needs.



## Chapter VII: Arrival and Orientations

### 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 AFS T-shirts. They will sort the students into groups depending upon where they are going within the Argentina.

Students will be traveling to 40 different host distribution sites around the country, Transportation to the site will depend on the location of the chapter. All students will most likely travel by bus, some others by plane or take some form of underground 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 get their chapters on the same day that they arrive in 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 facility so they can depart on a charter bus next morning.



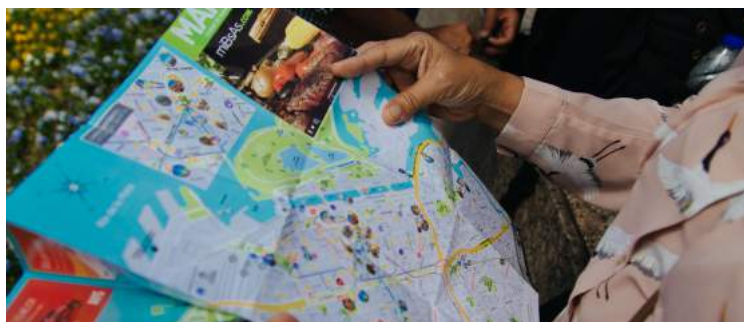
## Orientations

AFS Argentina has created a special material with specific content about the AFS Intercultural experience. This material is the one we use to work different issues in each orientation. AFS activities are based on our core values of dignity, respect for differences, harmony, sensitivity and tolerance.

AFS has orientations scheduled at important points throughout the year with the adjustment cycle in mind. They are designed to provide you and your host family with the support, information and skills you need to experience a rewarding year. For this reason, your attendance at all AFS Orientations is mandatory.

You are going to have four local orientations. They are organized for you to bring support to your intercultural experience journey. Besides, host families have their own orientation with similar content.

One week after your arrival, you be attending the Survival Orientation, it usually lasts one day. The content covered at 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. This orientation is followed up by a detailed orientation weekend that takes place 3-6 weeks after arrival at local level. This orientation is called Post Arrival. Then, after a few months and according to your programme you will attend Mid-Stay Orientation. And finally, before going back home, you will have the End of Stay Orientation.



## Chapter VIII: Sexual Harassment

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practice for young people. Often clarification of attitudes may be necessary and here, again, the advice of people you come to know and trust is very valuable. Knowledge about the people you socialize with is important, and this is acquired best through increasing knowledge of the culture. Equally important are your own values and beliefs regarding your behavior. In societies where some young people are sexually active, there are also many who are not. You should not compromise your own personal values and beliefs regarding sexual behavior. If you have sexual intercourse, you must protect yourself against AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Hugs, handshakes or one kiss on the cheeks are an accepted way of greeting people you know well, for example. family members, friends.

Sexual harassment and rape can happen in any country. Women especially are subjects to harassment and rape risks. We would like to draw your attention to the following advice:

- ✓ AFS students should not go to unknown places (parties, bars, events) alone or with people they don't know very well.
- ✓ They should avoid isolated places and never accept a ride or a drink from someone they don't know well.
- ✓ In a crowded place, when feeling harassed by someone, they should move away, try to make contact with or get the attention of other people or loudly yell to intimidate the offender.

### Protecting Yourself from Sexual Abuse

During your AFS experience, you'll have many new and different experiences. Yet some things remain the same:

Your body is always yours.

You always have the right to say no.

If something doesn't feel right to you, it probably isn't.

This information is designed to help you learn more about sexual abuse, how to prevent it, and where to go for help. Be sure to speak with your host family, your contact person, or another adult you trust about keeping yourself safe in your community.

Regardless of where you travel on your exchange program or the customs of the country in which you're living, you can be sure of one thing: your body belongs to you. While it's rare that someone will attempt to abuse you, it's important for you to be alert, aware, and informed about sexual abuse prevention. Do not allow anyone to do anything to you that does not feel right to you, regardless of who they are - male or female, young or old, what they do for a living, or your connection to him or her.

## Tips for Preventing & Dealing with Sexual Abuse

- ✓ Remember that it's always ok to say no.
- ✓ If you feel threatened, tell an adult that you trust. This can be your natural parents, your host parents, an AFS volunteer or staff, or anyone else that you feel you can trust and rely upon.
- ✓ Never go anywhere with a person you don't know.
- ✓ When you go out, always let an adult know where you are, and when your schedule or destination changes.
- ✓ Be a Friend to a Friend. If your friend tells you that he or she is being sexually abused, the first thing to do is listen. Be patient and respectful. Try not to judge or question your friend's behavior. Believe what your friend is telling you.
- ✓ Go to an adult you trust for advice and help. Involve a parent, teacher, or another adult that you trust. You will not be 'snitching.' You'll be helping to stop or prevent your friend from being abused.
- ✓ Talk to your friend and try to get him or her to talk to an adult. Offer to go with him or her. Report the abuser to an adult whom you trust.

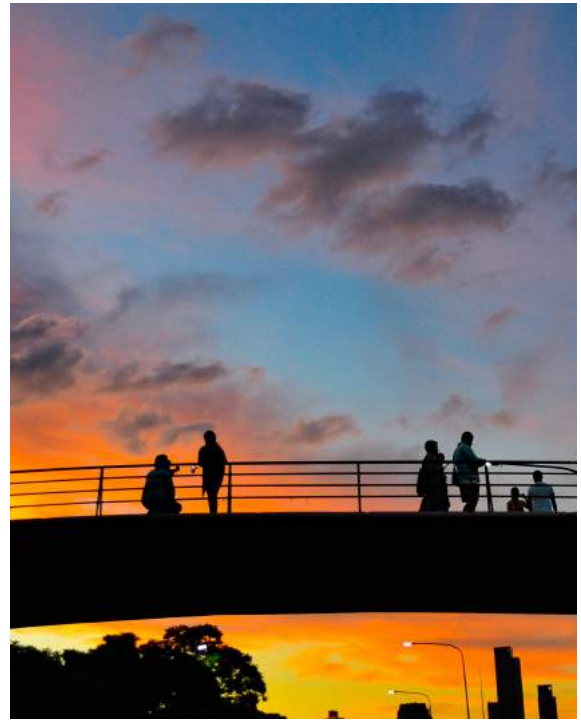


## Chapter IX: Personal Safety In and Around Home

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.

✓ 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.





✓ 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.



✓ 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.

✓ 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.



## Chapter X: Personal Safety Outside 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 you are 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 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 cities. If necessary, you should go to toilets in Department Stores (negocios), Restaurants and Hotels.



To avoid unpleasant situations away from home, AFS Argentina 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 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. Respect violate your curfew.

- There are no curfews set by authorities in Argentina. 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 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 strongly suggests that you ask your host family about the pubs (bar, confiteria) and discos (boliche). The policies vary from town to town and are different in each province.
- Dinner (cena) time in Argentina 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 certain time when it is dark. Even during daylight try to walk along with other people. Avoid empty streets.
- Try to carry your backpack (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 sunglasses.
- Like in most cities in the world, there are some areas considered unsafe, especially when it is dark. As said before, ask your host family, contact person 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 telefonica) 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 or 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.

### **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 (Comisaria del barrio), Municipal Police Station (Policia Municipal), Fire Department (Bomberos), Hospital or family doctor (Hospital o Medico de la familia).

### **Natural disasters, riots, earthquakes**

In any of these cases, do what your host family or AFS local representatives indicate. AFS Argentina'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.

## Chapter XI: 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 Support Coordinator shall be the responsible one.

The "consejero" and/or the local Support Coordinator 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 security rules:**

a) The "consejero" or local Support Coordinator 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 Support Coordinator 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 host family 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 Support Coordinator, 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 (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 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):

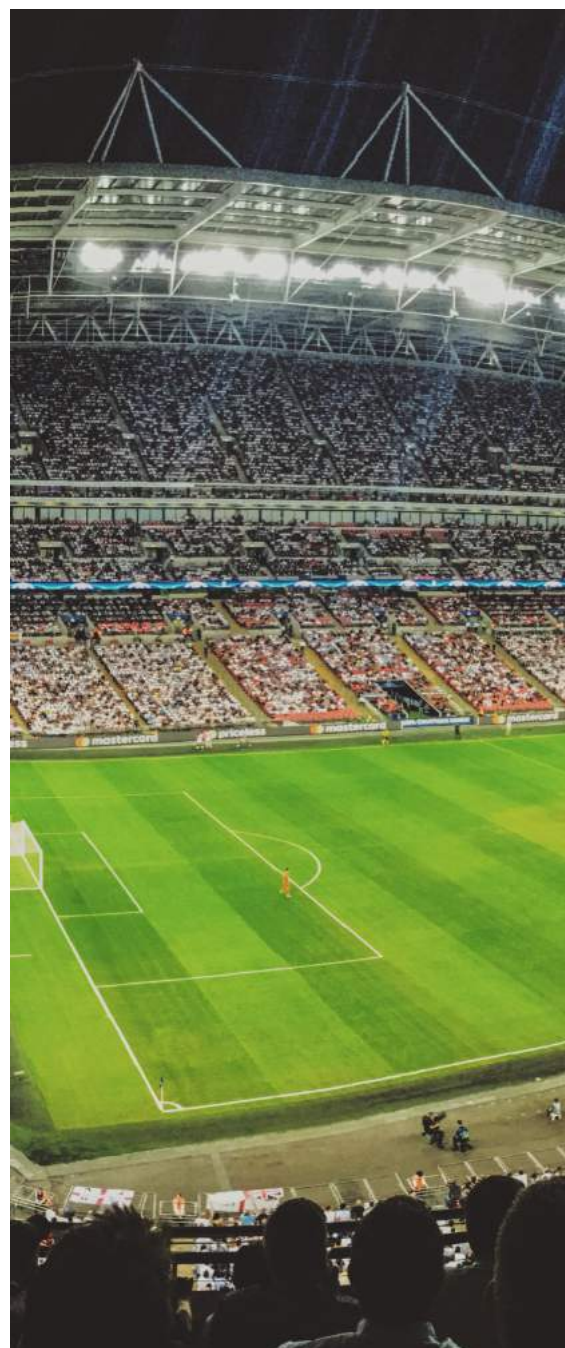
- The AFS Argentina National Office shall require a Temporary Program Release (or Program Waiver) document to be signed by natural parents while the trip is taking place.
- They are limited to 1 (one) trip, up to 5 (five) days, during school holidays.
- The "Consejero" must verify that all the security 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 verified 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.

#### 7) 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 advance 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 can only invite students from their own Chapter:
  - 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) 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.
- c) 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
- d) 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 Travel 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.

