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Welcome to China

“China is so vast in area (the third largest country after Russia and Canada) and in population (one-fifth of the world population) that almost anything said about the nation could be true. It’s crowded (in cities) and sparsely settled (in remote rural areas); the Han people is the majority of Chinese, yet the government also recognizes 55 ethnic minorities. The Chinese revere centuries-old traditions, but they also embrace western fashions, music and fast food; ancient and modern architecture is still in co-existence. The Chinese people are friendly and welcoming; the country dwellers tend to be more down-to-earth and warm-hearted. In sum, China is diverse, huge and internationally important.”

“All of the students here have something to be proud of. We survived ten months in a strange country, and had fun here. We have the tools to go into the world and do what we need to do. I know that all the students are incredibly gifted, and will certainly rise to any occasion. The experiences we had here are only a small part of our lives, but will definitely contribute to a greater whole, as we continue growing. I will always remember that school year I spent in China, meeting new people, learning the culture, and having the best time of my life.”

“The most important thing I have gathered was realizing that not all people are what they say they are. You really can’t judge a book by its cover.”

----An AFSer who spent one year in China

Congratulations on being selected as an AFS participant! Soon you will experience your own China!

“Welcome to China” is designed to help you get ready for your AFS experience in China. Your AFS host chapter, host family, and host school are always there to help you.

AFS China

Introduction

AFS National Office in China is under the supervision of China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE). CEAIE is the only authorized channel by the Chinese government especially the Chinese Ministry of Education to conduct AFS programs in China. As one of the largest nationwide not-for-profit organization conducting international educational exchanges in China, CEAIE has a full commitment to meeting the needs of China's modernization progress, developing exchanges and cooperation between the Chinese educational community and other parts of the world, promoting the advancement of education, culture, science and technology, and strengthening understanding and friendship among the peoples of all countries and regions of the world.



The AFS National Office was founded in 1999 in Beijing. It is responsible for the overall program planning, program operations and coordination in China while communicating and working with AFS offices in other countries around the world. It has 25 local offices in different parts of China. Each year China hosts and sends participants to and from more than 30 countries and regions across the world.

The national office has developed an efficient and reliable system combining professional expertise of staff and well-trained volunteer support base to reinforce the intercultural experience and to provide young participants with safe and valuable intercultural involvement opportunities.

The Year Program Sending in China began in the year of 1997. The first group of 28 students from Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai went abroad as exchange students to USA, Germany, Austria, Italy, Norway and Switzerland. Today, AFS has become the biggest intercultural program in China and provides opportunities to thousands of people to experience different cultures.

The year of 2001 was a milestone for AFS programs in China when the hosting programs kicked off successfully. The first 10 American and German year-program students arrived, living with Chinese families and attending school with their Chinese peers. The students learned authentic Chinese language, culture, the way of life and made a lot of good friends. Many of them passed the National Chinese Exam for Foreigners (HSK exam) after the year program.

So far, we have hosted over two thousands students from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United States and Venezuela. Now, we are glad to see that you are one of them.

AFS Programs are offering different types of programs for participants, such as Year Program and Short-term Programs.

Support Structure



Before You Depart.

Travel --- AFS is not designed as a tourist program

AFS offers the rare opportunity to be immersed in a culture and a country. It is likely, however, that you will have many opportunities to travel with your host family, school, community organization, local chapter or AFS programs in China. We strongly discourage traveling on your own or with friends.

Documents --- passport & visa

You must have a passport that will be valid for six months longer than your intended stay. In addition to your passport, you also need a visa to enter and reside in China. Visas are obtained through the Embassy or Consular offices in your home country, and requirements often vary from consulate to consulate. AFS will help you obtain the visa.

Fitting In --- open-minded and flexible

Remember that China is very different from your home—our language and cultures can seem so far apart from yours, and you will wonder if you will ever fit in. Be ready to find the difference, accept them and enjoy them—after all you do not come here only to find a same lifestyle. There is an often-quoted saying in the AFS world—“Not better, not worse, just different”.

Health Precautions --- medical assistance and insurance

AFS suggests that you discuss health recommendations in China with your personal doctor to determine what is best for you and your personal needs.

If you require any medical assistance during your stay, your host family or local volunteers will be ready to help you find it. As an AFS participant, your medical expenses are covered for illness or injuries incurred while on the program, exclusive of pre-existing, dental or visual aid expenses.

Expenditure --- plan ahead and budget accordingly

Host families will pay only for ordinary family events in which you are expected to participate. When you do such things as shopping for yourself or going out with friends, the expenses are your responsibility.

AFS recommends you bring about US\$2500 for one academic year in cash or traveler's check to meet your spending needs. Credit cards are widely accepted in big cities only. Nowadays, Alipay and Wechat pay are extremely popular and convenient payment apps. You should be prepared to plan ahead and budget accordingly. You will probably have to plan a special trip to a bank that may be far from your school or host family if you want to withdraw more cash.

Safety & Support --- AFS will always be available

China is relatively safe. During your stay, local AFS will be available to assist you as you learn to live as a Chinese. In the event of an emergency, AFS duty officer 86-13501271982 can be reached 24/7. Please see our "Safety Tips" for further information.

The AFS Rules in China

There is an idiom in China said “没有规矩，不成方圆”, which means “Nothing can be achieved without norms and standards”. So before starting the AFS journey in China, we hope all participants be clear of the rules and policies during the Program.

General AFS restrictions for all AFS Participants

- **No Drugs**

Except medically prescribed, any possession of drugs are not allowed by AFS and Chinese Government.

➤ **No Driving**

All AFS Participants are not allowed to drive Vehicle, such as cars, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters and motorboats. They are not allowed to fly airplanes either.

➤ **No Hitchhiking**

Hitchhiking is not a common form of traveling in China as it is considered a dangerous activity.

Rules for AFS Participants in China

➤ No smoking

➤ No alcohol drinking

➤ Regular school attendance and active

participation in school activities are mandatory. Students who skip classes up to 3 days will be confronted with ER decision.

➤ AFS participants are NOT eligible for being employed on either a full or part-time basis.

➤ AFS participants are not allowed to take part in any public political meeting or parade without permission.

➤ Due to the law and rules in China, there is NO Program Release in China.

Participants are NOT allowed to extend the duration of their stay after the program.



These rules apply to every participant hosted in China at all times. If an AFS participant breaks any rule, he or she would be sent home immediately as of Early Return (ER) and his or her AFS program participation would be terminated.

Other reasons for Early Return (ER)

Based on the AFS participation agreement, signed by the AFS participant and his/her natural family, the following rules may also lead to program termination:

- Abuse of alcohol
- Pregnancy
- Violation of local laws
- Injury or illness which is clinically diagnosed as keeping one from participating in the AFS program
- Inability to adapt to host country and in particular to life with one's host family
- Serious violation of School Rules or being expelled from the host school

Adventure with AFS China

General Information of China

FOOD

Chinese cuisine enjoys high reputation in the world due to its abundant and exquisite cooking, delicious taste and charming appearance. It has always been considered as a form of art in Chinese culture.



Throughout history, Chinese people have always been passionate about cooking and appreciating food. It differs due to the diversity of the climate, products and customs of

local regions. Therefore, there are widely different food styles and tastes in different regions.

✓ Peking Duck - roasted in a special way and eaten with green onion and the sweet wheat sauce wrapped with a thin pancake.

✓ Mongolian Hotpot - a Chinese version of fondue

✓ “jiaozi” or dumpling - pasta-like dough wrapped round pork meat, chives and onions, similar in idea to Italian ravioli. The best “jiaozi” is home-made. On the Chinese New Year’s Eve family members get together making “jiaozi” while enjoying the happiness of the holiday season and the family reunion.



Attention: Animal organs like feet, heads, liver and some insects are part of Chinese cuisine. Try to be open-minded and you may find a new world.

PEOPLE

China has the largest population in the world: about 1,332,810,869 people were counted according to the national census on April 28, 2011. The principal ethnic majority is the Han Chinese who accounts for 92% of the population. The remaining 8% includes Zhuang, Hui, Uyghur, Yi, Miao, Tibetans, Mongols, etc. Also other numerous lesser nationalities account for 67 Million, of which there are 55 ethnic groups.

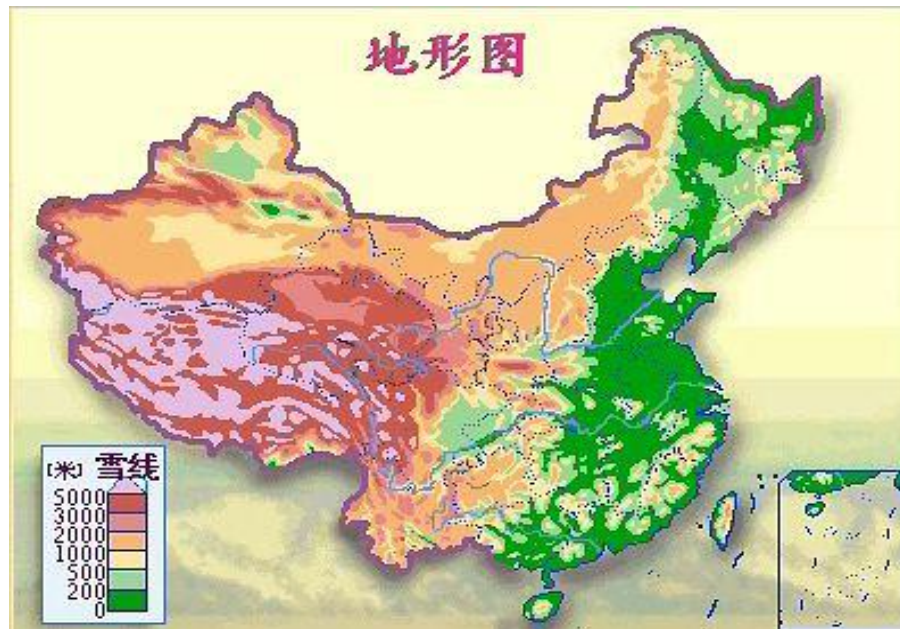
In an effort to reduce the rate of population growth, the Chinese government, since 1978, has promoted One-Child Policy among the Han. This policy has also changed the structure of families. You’ll always find 3 people in one family, father, mother and their child, especially in cities. But you will



find that there are uncles and aunts and their children. So you won’t feel lonely. Since

2016, the Chinese government fully open the Two-Child Policy and encourage parents to have their second child.

CLIMATE



China has a climate dominated by dry and wet monsoons, which make clear temperature differences in winter and summer. In winter, northern winds coming from inland areas are cold and dry; in summer, southern winds from marine areas are warm and moist.

The temperature between north and south varies greatly in China in winter, while in summer the temperature is high throughout the country.

Generally speaking, in the north, such as in Beijing, it is dry and cold in winter, but hot and rainy in summer.

In January, the coldest month of the year, the temperature can be as low as -30°C in Heilongjiang, the very northeast province. In Beijing, people often wear down coats outside and warm thermal underwear inside, and the normal room temperature is about 20°C with central heating.

In the south, such as Nanjing and Shanghai, the lowest temperature is around -5°C in winter. However, there is no central heating in south China. It does snow in winter,

but not much. So when you think about the climate in China, remember it varies from place to place.

LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY

China is located in Asia. It borders Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan to the north, North Korea to the east, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, India, Bhutan and Nepal to the south, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to the west.

China's two most famous rivers, the Huang He (also called the Yellow River) and the Changjiang (called by westerns as Yangtze), rise on the eastern edge of the Plateau of Tibet and flow eastward, eventually empty into Bo Hai Gulf and the East China Sea respectively.

The capital of China is Beijing, which is in the northeast of China. Other Major Cities are Shanghai (on the east coast), Tianjin (also on the east coast), Chongqing (in the middle of China), Shenyang (in Liaoning province), Guangzhou (in Guangdong province), Xi'an (in Shanxi province), etc. Both Hong Kong and Macao are on the southeast coast.



LANGUAGE AND CHARACTERS

China has 55 different ethnic minority groups, each with its own language or dialect. Mandarin Chinese, as the official language through the country, is spoken by more than 70% of the population and is also used in Singapore and Malaysia and other Asian countries. It is also the language used in all schools. Cantonese is another main dialect, which is used in daily communication in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong.



The simplified Chinese is the officially used in Chinese mainland.

RELIGION AND BELIEVES

The principal religions and philosophies in China are Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. There are 100 million Buddhists and approximately 60 million Muslims, five million Protestants (including large numbers of Evangelicals) and four million Roman Catholics, largely independent of Vatican control.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Chinese New Year / Spring Festival

Chinese New Year, also known as Spring Festival, is the longest and most important festivity in the Chinese lunar calendar. The festival traditionally begins on

the first day of the first month in the Chinese calendar, which should be some day between January and March of Gregorian calendar.

Spring Festival is extremely important for Chinese family gathering. So the schools will even modify the time of winter vacation according to it.



Chinese New Year's Eve is known as *chúxī*, which literally means "Year-pass Eve".

The other important day during the Chinese New Year is Lantern Festival which is on the 15th day. Traditionally it is considered to be the end of Spring Festival.

Qing Ming/Tomb Sweeping Day - April 5

Qing Ming is a time for people to go outside and enjoy the greenery of springtime and tend to the graves of their passed beloved ones.

Dragon Boat Festival / Duanwu Festival

The festival occurs on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar. Three of the most widespread activities for the Duanwu Festival are eating *zongzi*, an angular rice ball wrapped in reed or bamboo leaves; drinking realgar wine, and racing dragon boats.



National Day - October 1

This holiday is considered to be a “golden week” in China. Many families will go for a short trip or pay visit to relatives.



Mid-Autumn Day

The Mid-Autumn Festival is a popular harvest festival as well as a holiday for family and friends reunion. It is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month in the Chinese calendar, which is usually around late September or early October in the Gregorian calendar.



New Year's Day

The New Year's Day, falling on 1st, January, is a legal holiday in China.

※ *Christmas, Thanks Giving Day and Easter are not public holidays, though; there has been increasing number of Chinese people who do enjoy celebrating the holiday now in China.*

However, exchange students will not be guaranteed for any day-off for Christmas.

※ *In China there is a special governmental regulation to “borrow weekends” for National Holidays in order to make up of a longer vacation.*

For example, the legal holiday of National Day in October is 3 days. But in fact people will rest for 7 days. The other 4 days are in fact “borrowed” from the weekends ahead and after. So it may happens that before or after the 7 days holiday, students will have to go to school for continuous 7 days including Saturday and Sunday. This might be confusing for foreigners but it is necessary for the participants to follow the schedule and go to school.

※ *Hosted participants in China will come across with a couple of long public holidays each year, National Day holiday and Spring Festival, both of which will last 7-10 days. During these two holidays, the whole China will be out of office, which means the AFS Office, local chapters and host schools might be difficult to reach. The duty officer of AFS CHN National Office will only handle the emergency case. In this way, if the participants have any adaption issue with the host family or host school,*

we highly recommend them report and solve the problems ahead of the holiday or afterwards.

CHINESE CURRENCY - RMB

China uses Yuan (¥), as the basic unit of money. There are two types of money: coins and paper bills.

COINS

1 yuan = ¥ 1.00 (10 jiao/100 fen)

5 jiao = ¥ 0.50

1 jiao = ¥ 0.10 (10 fen)

5 fen = ¥ 0.05

2 fen = ¥ 0.02

1 fen = ¥ 0.01



BILLS

1 yuan = ¥ 1.00

5 yuan = ¥ 5.00

10 yuan = ¥ 10.00

20 yuan = ¥ 20.00

50 yuan = ¥ 50.00

100 yuan = ¥ 100.00

1 jiao = ¥ 0.10 yuan

5 jiao = ¥ 0.50 yuan



※ Participants may bring US dollars or Euros to China which can be easily converted into RMB at local banks. Foreign banknote and travel checks can be exchanged at Bank of China only.

CHINESE TEA



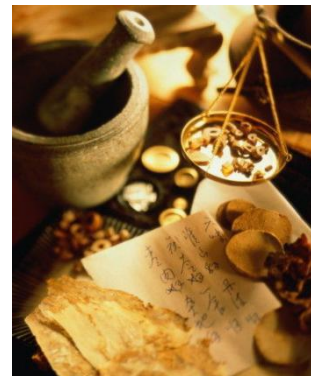
Just as coffee in the West, tea has become a part of daily life in China. You can see teahouses scattered on streets like cafes in the west. It has such a close relationship with Chinese that in recent years, a new branch of culture related to tea is rising up in China, which has a pleasant name of "Tea Culture". It includes the articles, poems, pictures about tea, the art of making and drinking tea, and some customs about tea.

In China, there are some tea customs. For example, hosts will inject tea into teacup only seven tenth, and it is said the other three tenth will be filled with friendship and affection. Moreover, the teacup should be empty in three gulps. Tea plays an important role in Chinese emotional life.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Traditional Chinese Medicine is an indispensable part of the glorious culture of Chinese nation.

Totally different from the principles of western medicine, theories of traditional Chinese medicine emphasize the balance of the whole body. In the treatment process, the diagnostic procedure involves four steps: observing, listening, inquiring, and palpating. Among them, palpating is the most important. Other methods of treatment include acupuncture and moxibustion, breathing therapy (Qigong), and medical massage.















Traditional Chinese Medicine could be mysterious for Westerners. Participants must follow doctors' advice to take it.

CHINESE ZODIAC

Chinese astrology has more than 3,000 years' history. Ancient Chinese people invented the 10 Heavenly Stems and 12 Earthly Branches for chronological purpose. However, since most people in ancient times were illiterate so that 12 animals were designated to symbolize the 12 Earthly Branches in order to facilitate memory. These lucky animals are rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig successively.

Chinese astrology argues that one's personality profile can be revealed from one's birth time. In China everybody knows which animal sign he or she is born under.

 鼠	 牛	 虎	 兔	 龍	 蛇
 羊	 猴	 雞	 狗	 馬	 猪

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Length			
1m	100cm	3 尺(chǐ)	30 寸(cùn)
1 Km	1 公里 (gong li)	1000 m	
Weight			
1kg	1000g	1 公斤(gōngjīn)	2 斤(jīn) 20 两(liang)

Chinese Core Values

The Chinese society, families, schools and the media are guided by the principles which tell one how to think and act. We suggest AFS participants learn something about these beliefs and attitudes. Those phenomenon you feel hard to understand are always rooted in these core values.

FACE

It is important for Chinese people to keep high status in front of others, meaning saving face. Chinese people usually praise and show respect to others and avoid being inappropriate, shamed, or wrong. In general, they enjoy compliments rather than losing face.



In this way, people seldom point out one's shortcoming or mistake face to face. Because it is considered to be a very impolite behavior. Many AFS participants in China find it uncomfortable that the host family not telling them their discontentment directly, but asking help from the local volunteer or school teachers. However, the host family just does not want to hurt participant by making him/her "losing face". They are intending to protect rather than hurt you. On the other hand, holding this value for life-long time, the host family actually has no idea how to point out your problem in front of you.

FAMILY

Filial piety and loyalty are valued by the most of Chinese families. Parents will do everything they can for the children's growth and the children are expected to compensate their parents' sacrifice in the future. Male members such as grandfather and father are commonly thought as the core roles in a family.

Participants may find the host father quite dominant in the family. All other family members have to listen to his



idea. The father may even seldom laugh or smile in order to maintain his commanding presence.

The big family gathering is a very important activity. It is common all around the country that the family pays visit to grandparents each weekend and meets

During the traditional holidays like Spring Festival, there will be even formal and big family gathering. AFS suggest participants join this kind of activities actively. This is a good opportunity to experience the real Chinese culture as a real family member. Your host family will be quite happy and proud of you.

RELATIONSHIPS

Chinese people tend to connect with each other through obligations and commitments, establishing a social network in which they can seek mutual benefits. When doing business, family members and friends are the useful personal relationships. No one can hardly ignore relationships in this society.

PATRIOTISM

Chinese people have a strong sense of national pride and historical culture. Since the Han Chinese make up the majority of China's total population, they obviously leave their culture influences on the other 55 ethnic groups. As China develops at a fast speed, Chinese people tend to be more proud of the country.

Chinese people cannot bear others look down upon or say anything bad of the country. AFS suggest the participants keep away from the political topics during any conversation.

In school education, patriotism is a very important part. For example, each Monday morning there will be a flag-raising ceremony that everyone



in the school has to take part in. Sometimes the AFS participants will be invited to hoist up the flag. It is a great honor.

HARMONY

Confucianism is the dominant philosophy of the Chinese society, which attaches importance to respect for seniority and position as well as orderly relationships among people. Sometimes they tend to avoid conflicts and fights in order to keep harmony with others. So you may find it hard to tell one's true feelings and thoughts.

PROSPERITY

In the past, Chinese people worked hard to earning a living and tried to be rich when China was poor and state-planned. People traditionally thought wealth could bring higher social status. Now, some people think that money equals power and control over others. Due to the admiration to wealth, making profits is generally the priority regardless of where the money come from.



Based on the pursuit of prosperity, Chinese students are forced to study very hard in order to be enrolled into a top university, which is believed to be the base and premise to a better job and high salary. It is common problem that AFS participants might find the classmates are so busy with school work that they seems not interested in the communication with foreign friends. We hope you could show more understanding to this phenomenon and try your best to initiate the talking. You will get to know some real friends no matter how busy they are.

HIERARCHY

Ranking and position are highly valued in the Chinese social system. Those higher-ranking people such as governmental officials, business leaders and the seniors

often expect privilege and respect from lower-ranking people. Position may be more important than skills and abilities, which leads to the low efficiency in working and solving problems.

In school, the value of hierarchy is reflected by the authority of teacher. It is considered to be rude to interrupt into teacher's interpretation during the class. Even though you do have questions, you'd better write it down and ask during the break, or at least wait till the teacher finish the current part. Student cannot talk before raising the hand and receiving permission from the teacher. If you have different opinion toward what your teacher interprets, please discuss with him/her in private after the class.



Chinese Family

The Chinese have a strong sense of family, and they respect hierarchy and interpersonal obligations. In most families both parents work full time. Families generally have one child, and it is not uncommon for grandparents to live with the family. Parents expect to know when their children are going out and where they are going, and most families have certain rules for the children regarding the amount of time they are supposed to invest into recreational activities. In addition, parents often encourage active involvement in their children's school activities. Chinese students typically spend a great amount of time in their school work.



Housing

Most Chinese families in the cities live in multi-story apartment buildings. All space within the home is generally considered shared. You may live in your own room or share with your host sibling.

Family Activities on Weekend

Shopping, visiting relatives and friends, going to exhibition, attending extra-curriculum classes, etc.

Diet and Meals

Typically, the Chinese diet consists more of vegetables, rice and noodles and meat. Noodles and dumplings are popular in the north, while rice dishes are more common in the south. Chinese cuisine is varied and delicious with a wide spectrum of textures and tastes. It is important to note that Chinese families are not expected to provide western-style food. While it is fairly widely available in the form of Western fast-food chains, it is comparatively expensive and will tend to create a distance between you and your peers and host family.

Dress and Appearance

Chinese teenagers, while dressing very much according to popular teenage styles worldwide, wear their school uniforms most of each school day and at all school-sponsored events. You should bring jeans or other casual pants, T-shirts, collared shirts, sweaters, comfortable shoes for walking, a bathing suit, raincoat and a full range of warm clothing for the winter months including warm thermal underwear, snow boots and a heavy jacket. For special occasions, more formal dress is expected: for women a dress or blouse and skirt for men a jacket, slacks and tie.



It would typically be unacceptable to wear torn, worn out,

or revealing clothing. Note that Chinese students do not usually have large wardrobes (or closet space), so limiting the number of items you bring will not only help keep your luggage compact but will also help you fit in with your Chinese peers.

School uniforms will be required and typically consist of a jogging suit, typically worn over street clothes, and a more formal uniform for special school occasions. The typical cost of a uniform is 400 Yuan.

Hygiene

It is customary to shower before going to bed at night in most Chinese families whereas people from many other countries tend to shower in the morning before they leave home for work/school.

The frequency of taking shower differs according to different regions in China. For example, in the North people may take shower once a week in winter because of the low temperature, while in the South once a day in summer because of the high humidity. We suggest participants communicate with host families to reach an agreement of the frequency to take showers, in order not to break the families' pace of life.

Communication

AFS participants are expected to be a close part of the family by actively involving in a variety of family activities. Interaction and communication are highly valued in the family dynamics so do not hesitate to share how you feel with your family members whenever you feel you need to.

Things to Know about Living with Your Chinese Host Family

- ✧ Host families are not paid. They are volunteers. They open their homes to students in order to share their community and culture as well as to enrich their own family lives.
- ✧ You do not pay for your own food at home or school.



- ✧ You pay for the international calls and the Internet fees at home.
- ✧ Ask for permission if you want to do something or go somewhere.
- ✧ Always call your family first if you cannot go home on time.
- ✧ Do not drink tap water. It is advisable to drink boiled water.
- ✧ Always keep your room clean and tidy and keep your things in good order.
- ✧ You might find the Chinese parents criticize their children more than praise them. This is a part of the Chinese culture and tradition. They do see their children's good behavior or progress, but they tend to hide their satisfaction and encourage children to do better in their own way.
- ✧ You might find children in China are probably not as independent as children from other countries. Parents usually give more care, attention or instruction to their children.
- ✧ Consult your family about their Internet use, bedtime and getting up routine, and laundry habits.
- ✧ Avoid unnecessary waste of food, water, or other daily necessities, as a sense of being thrifty is highly valued in Chinese families.

Chinese School

The School System

Basic education in China comprises of pre-school education, primary, junior and senior middle schooling.

Children usually go to kindergartens at the age of



three. They start primary school when they are six years old and study there for six years. Then they go to junior middle school for three years. Compulsory education is 9 years in China. Most of the students will go to senior middle school after the junior years.

Due to the large population and limited enrollment opportunities to universities, college entrance examination is a very big challenge to the senior high school students. Do not feel surprised to see your host family sibling is too burdened with his or her school and homework.

Generally most AFS participants will be placed in classes of Senior 1 level.

Typical School Calendar & Daily Schedule

The school year typically runs from early September through the early July. School is usually in session from 7:30–8:00 a.m. to 4:00–4:30 p.m. and some optional sports, music club or study sessions take place after 4 p.m. The school day is typically divided into seven lessons, with a lunch break between noon and 1:30 p.m.

Academics

Academic achievement is extremely important to most Chinese students and their families. Therefore, a great deal of time is devoted to study. School days are long and people stress on major subjects instead of arts and music. Classroom work often means reciting and being tested orally by the teacher and sometimes evaluated by the teacher in front of the class.

Typical Classes and Activities

Chinese schools and classrooms are comparatively large, with 40 to 55 students in a classroom. The class remains together throughout the day, with teachers coming to the class, except for some music and laboratory classes.

There is always a Flag Rising



Ceremony on every Monday morning. During the class interval, students participate in exercising or eye massages.

Things to Know about Attending Your Chinese School

- ✧ All of the schools in which AFS participants are placed are top academic high schools. The standard of behavior and academic engagement is very high and adherence to school rules and behavioral standards will be expected of AFSers, just as they are for Chinese students.
- ✧ Schools usually provide 2 months of Chinese language classes at the beginning of the program. If you want to further improve your language skill, you might need to pay by yourself.
- ✧ AFS students are expected to be actively involved in various school activities and show commitment to communication and interaction with their teachers and Chinese classmates.

Typical School Rules

You are supposed to follow all the rules and regulations for the Chinese students without exception.

- ✧ Attend school on time. Don't be late for school or skip school.
- ✧ Behave oneself in class and finish required homework on time.
- ✧ Take an active part in social activities and sports.
- ✧ Smoking, alcohol or drug is prohibited.
- ✧ Respect the teachers, parents and the elderly. Be polite and friendly to schoolmates.
- ✧ No religious activities on school campus.
- ✧ **No** make-up or jewelry at school.
- ✧ **No** dyeing of the hair.
- ✧ **No** dating for high school students.
- ✧ When you have a question in class, put up your hands and ask for the teacher's permission before you speak.
- ✧ **No** working for money.
- ✧ Wear school uniform.

✧ Stay out of gangs or notorious groups.

※ *Please note that in China, host schools are an indispensable part of our AFS network. The school coordinators help to find host families for the hosted participants. All the travel applications would first be applied to the host school, which functions as a local chapter in our network.*

Cultural Trips Organized by AFS CHN

Both hosting schools and local chapters will organize some activities and short-term trips every now and then to enrich participants' experience in China. But to the extent of nationwide, AFS CHN will normally organize 2 optional cultural trips each year. Students can apply for the trip according to their own schedule and economic condition.

First one is the trip to **Yunnan**, always scheduled in late December or early January. It will last for 6-8 days while the cost to be around 3200-3800 Yuan RMB. Students could enjoy the beauty of the nature in Southwest China and experience the customs of some ethnic minorities.

Second one is the trip to **Xi'an**, normally scheduled in the end of May and last for 5-7 days, with the cost around 2500-3000 Yuan RMB. Participants could enjoy several places of historical interests and taste the traditional Chinese dishes in one of the most famous ancient capitals.

The detailed information of the trip will be released 2-3 months ahead for the students to make decision and arrange the domestic travel. Staff from AFS CHN national office and volunteers from local chapters will join the group as companion & supervision. It is not only a chance for students to get together but also an opportunity for AFS to communicate with the participants face to face.

AFS Cultural Trip to Yunnan



AFS Cultural Trip to Xi'an



Typical Day of My Life in China

Time	Activity
6:00	get up
6:30	have breakfast in host family
7:00	go to school by bus
7:30	morning reading
8:00	classes in the morning
10:00	physical exercises in class-break
10:30	classes in the morning
12:00	have lunch with classmates in school canteen
13:30	afternoon classes begin
16:30	after-school activities / do sports / go home
18:00	dinner with host family
19:00	watch TV / help with housework with family members
20:30	do homework /take shower
22:00	go to sleep

AFS China Travel Policy

AFS China Participants Travel Policy is designed to maintain the integrity of AFS programs, help participants better understand Chinese culture and history, fully adapt to their lives in China.

So long as the participant is on program, AFS China takes the responsibility to maintain their well-being, avoid and/or reduce potential risks and provide on-time

support in the event of an emergency. The following guidelines covering from the definition of different travels to the management upon each context are established under these circumstances.

Should a participant travel without complying with AFS China travel policy, the Early Return decision will be taken into consideration.

AFS is not designed as a tourist program

AFS offers a great opportunity to be immersed in a culture and a country. It is likely, however, that you will have many opportunities to travel with your host family, school, community organization, local chapter or AFS programs in China. We strongly discourage traveling on your own or with friends.

Types of Travel

There are several categories of AFS-sanctioned travel.

- Formal permission from AFS China and a signed travel waiver from natural parents are required for the following types of travel:

- *Overnight Independent Travel away from your host family and host community, **not** organized by AFS national office or local office, host school or host family.*
- *Independent Day-trip out of hosted province or municipality.*

- Formal permission from AFS China is required but a signed travel waiver from natural parents is not required for the following types of travel:

- *Independent Day-trip within hosted province or municipality.*

- Formal permission from AFS China and a signed travel waiver from natural parents are not required for the following types of travels:

- *Travels organized by AFS national or local office*
- *Travels organized by host school*

- *Travels organized by host family*

Travel Policy within Three Months upon Arrival

Within three months upon arrival, the following travel requests will not be considered to approve by AFS China:

- *Overnight Independent Travel;*
- *Independent Day-trip;*
- *Visits from natural parents, relatives or friends from home.*

Travel Policy after Three Months upon Arrival

After three months upon arrival, participants' independent travel requests will be considered by AFS CHN national office in condition that the following travel rules be respected:

- All requests for independent travel must be submitted to school coordinator **at least 14 days prior to** the participant's proposed departure date.
- The travel plan must be approved by all parties including host family, host school, local office of host partner, national office of both sending and hosting partner, and participant's natural parents.
- The travel should not violate AFS safety guidelines.
- The travel must not interfere with school attendance.
- *Only statutory public holidays, summer vacation and winter vacation can be identified as non-school days. The period of cultural trips organized by AFS China National Office is not considered to be "non-school day" for the other participants who are not registered in the trips. So the independent travel request during this period will not be taken into consideration.*

- The travel must not interfere with mandatory activities organized by AFS, both on a national level and on a local level, includes school trips.
- Travel does not interfere with host family plans to pursue activities with a participant, especially holiday plans.
- Travel does not interfere with the participant's adaptation or integration. Travel will not be allowed if a participant is experiencing adaptation problems of any kind.
- Frequent travel does not encourage integration in the host family and host community. So the approval for travel may be denied if a participant has traveled frequently.
 - *Making short trip (two days or less than two days) more than twice a month, or long trip (more than two days) more than once a month will be considered as "Frequently".*
- No single trip should exceed **10 days**.
- Participants are not allowed to take travel **one week** prior to departure.
- No independent travel is allowed to where AFS CHN cannot provide prompt assistance, such as Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan etc.
- No independent travel is approved to be abroad.
- In case of an independent travel, AFS participants are advised to choose convenient vehicles such as plane.
- *Overnight Independent Travel* and *Independent Day-trip out of hosted province or municipality* should be accompanied by an adult contact person (**21 years or above**) who is approved by host families, schools or local offices. AFS CHN national office reserves the right to check the reliability of the contact person.
- One contact person could be responsible for **5 AFS students at most**. His valid Identity documents (ID card or passport) should be provided in order to prove his reliability.

- Participants are not allowed to take night trains without accompany of an adult (21 years or above), even though with host school or local office's approval.
- AFS CHN participants are not allowed to accommodate in hotels without being accompanied by an adult (21 years or older) with host school or local office's approval.
- For *Independent Day-trip within the hosted province or municipality*, participants should not depart from host family / host school early than **5 am** or arrive back later than **10 pm** of the day. Curfew time should be respected in priority.
- If the travel is organized by a travel agency, it should be approved by host family, host school or local offices. And AFS CHN national office reserves the right to check the reliability of the travel agency.
- A participant may not pay for transportation, accommodation or to travel agency until the travel is approved by all parties and Travel Approval from the AFS CHN National Office is received. Participants are responsible to take their own risks if they pay for the tickets ahead of time but rejected for the travel request in the end.
- Host school, local office or national offices reserve the right to reject the independent travel if they think it is inappropriate.

How to Obtain Approval for Independent Travel

Overnight Independent Travel or Independent Day-trip out of province or municipality

1. The participant should first fill in the **Application for Travel** with the detailed information and travel plan. The materials to prove the identity of the Contact Person should be attached, photocopy of ID card, passport, residence permit, etc.
2. The participant should have the Application approved by the host parents by asking for their signatures on the Form.

3. Application form should then be submitted to school coordinator, who will check the information and then either give his/her approval by signing or reject with certain reason.
4. If approved, the school coordinator will pass the form to AFS CHN local office.
5. The local office will double check the information and then either give their approval by signing or reject with certain reason.
6. If approved, the signed Application Form will be sent to AFS CHN National Office for approval.
7. The National Office would do necessary verification of the travel request and inform the partner office if qualified.
8. Once the partner office approved, a Travel Waiver should be signed by natural parents.

***Travel Waiver** is a document signed by participants' natural parents or guardian to agree that during the trip, the AFS participant is not the responsibility of AFS and that they will take full responsibility. However, the participant is still bound by the terms and conditions of the AFS Participation Agreement, and will remain under AFS Medical coverage during the trip. But this does not mean that AFS has to provide support to get medical treatment.*

9. When the signed Travel Waiver has arrived, AFS CHN national office will inform the local office about the travel approval, after which the participant will be able to put forward the further arrangement.

Independent Day-trip within province or municipality

1. The participant should first fill in the **Application for Travel** with the detailed information and travel plan.
2. The participants should have the Application approved by the host parents by asking for their signatures on the Form.

3. Application form should then be submitted to school coordinator, who will check the information and then either give his/her approval by signing or reject with certain reason.
4. If approved, the school coordinator will pass the form to AFS CHN local office.
5. The local office will double check the information. The applicant will be required to provide the round trip ticket for the transportation if necessary. Then the local office will either give their approval by signing or reject with certain reason.
6. If approved, the signed Application Form will be sent to AFS CHN National Office for reference and the participant will receive the formal approval for travel.

Special Travel policy to Hong Kong and Macao SAR, China

While all the independent travel policies are in effect, AFS China has special stipulations applying to participants' Independent Travel to Hong Kong and Macao SAR, since it is difficult for us to provide support timely and effectively to those in these two districts.

Though in the same country, Hong Kong and Macao SAR have their own social economic background pretty different than that in China Mainland. Ordinary citizen of China Mainland has to follow certain procedure to enter these two regions, which is time consuming.

There is AFS Hong Kong who is an independent AFS organization as same as AFS China. In emergency AFS China could ask assistance from AFS Hong Kong. However, there is no AFS organization in Macao SAR, which becomes an even serious challenge in risk management.

The procedure to apply for an independent travel to Hong Kong or Macao SAR:

1. Same as other independent travel request, participants need to submit travel application form together with other necessary documents to AFS China national office 14 days before the trip starts.
2. National Office will check all the information and then ask AFS Sending Organization to provide travel waiver signed by participants' natural parents.
3. After travel waiver arrived, National Office will inform the local AFS office, host school and the participant by e-mail for the **PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**.
4. Participant can buy tickets after receiving e-mail from AFS China national office.
5. Participant needs to provide the e-ticket of him/herself and the contact person. E-ticket should contain passenger's name and e-ticket number.
6. Participants should also provide valid identification documents of the contact person (see below "**Documents the contact person need to provide**") to AFS national office.
7. If any of the above materials cannot arrive in AFS China National Office five days prior to departure, participants cannot receive the **FINAL APPROVAL** from AFS China. The travel plan must be cancelled or postponed.

Documents the contact person need to provide:

The contact person should be over 21 years old and he/she should accompany the participants during the whole trip.

1. If the contact person is a Chinese citizen who lives in China's mainland, the following documents should be provided:
 - Valid Exit-Entry Permit for traveling to and from Hong Kong and Macao;
 - Round trip flight e-ticket at least 5 days before the departure date.
2. If the contact person is an overseas college student studying or a staff working in China:

- Valid documents proving the holder's legal status (student card, work permit or business card);
 - Round trip flight e-ticket at least 5 days before the departure date.
3. If the contact person is currently residing in Hong Kong or Macao:
- Valid residence document (ID card or residence permit etc.)
4. If the contact person is host family members or relatives:
- Travel plan and accommodation arrangement during the trip, it should be the same with the student's;
 - Round trip flight e-ticket at least 5 days before the departure date.

Natural family and friend visits

1. AFS participants hosted in China will **not** be permitted to request approval for any visits from relatives or friends until they have been on the program for **a semester**.
2. Participants should get approval from host family and AFS CHN local chapter before the natural family and friends visit from the home country.
3. An AFS participant could travel with his/her natural parents, other relatives or friends from the home country. But this kind of travel will also be considered as independent travel and subject to above guidelines and application procedure. **Application for Travel** should be submitted and Travel Waiver is required.
4. Since visits from the natural parents or friend can be disruptive to a participant's adjustment and adaptation, they should last **no longer than 5 days**.
5. Any visiting natural family member or friend must obtain travel insurance prior to departure from their home country. AFS will not manage, oversee or pay for any medical care needed by visitors.
6. AFS CHN **do not** have responsibility in providing assistance in logistics or visa applications for participants' natural family visit.

Early Return for personal reason

If participant needs to go home early for any personal reasons, he/she should submit the application to AFS China at least one month before the scheduled return.

In the attachment you can see the Application Form for Travel. Print and fill it in when you would like to apply for a travel.

Medical Claim

All AFS participants are covered by AFS Insurance. For the details please check the Medical Pamphlet released by the AFS office of sending country.

If AFS hosted participants in China pay the medical cost by themselves, AFS CHN National Office will help to ask for the reimbursement from AFS International, who will run to the Insurance Company in further.

Please pay attention to the following points for the medical claim:

- Always remember to ask for the receipts in hospital, with your full name --- the same with the name on your passport. Don't use your Chinese name, Chinese Pingyin name or Nickname.
- AFS International reimbursement cycle is **3 month**. If participants cannot get money back before return home, we will transfer the money to AFS Sending Partner. Please keep contact with AFS in your country if you have money unpaid.

Medical Claim Procedure

- Go to hospital with the assistance of your host family and make sure your name on the receipts is correct.
- Keep all the invoices and prescriptions from the hospital
- Bring all the docs to your school coordinator
- Ask your school coordinator to fill in the Medical Claim Form and then send all docs to AFS CHN National Office
- AFS CHN National Office will transfer money to your school coordinator or direct to anyone who paid the bill when we receive the reimbursement from AFS International.

In the attachment there is a sample of Medical Claim Form. Please notice that it should be the school coordinator or local officer to fill it in.

Tips in Daily Life

Participants will always come across with some unexpected difficulties especially at the beginning of their life in China. There are some tips below which we hope could be helpful for the integration.

Online Communication

Facebook and Twitter are not available in China, which might make participants inconvenient to contact the old friends in home country. However, since all coins have two sides, this will also help participants make new friends in China!

In China, teenagers also have many social networks to communicate with each other, just like Facebook and Twitter. The following Apps are what participants could have a try:

- Weixin (Wechat)

It's a free instant messaging service application relying on the Internet, which could be used to send voice message, video, pictures and text by cell phone. It can also provide payment service.



- QQ imqq.com(English) www.qq.com (Chinese)

It's an App with which you could chat with millions of friends from all over the world and enjoy video calls. Besides, it offers Games, Qzone(homepage), Music download service.



✧ Basics of QQ International

QQ International is a popular communicative tool now in China. With a large number of users, QQ International can help you keep in touch with your old friends, make new friends, hold small online seminars or even start video calls.



- Download, install and Register

- Visit www.imqq.com , click the “Download” button. The program will be downloaded onto your desktop or downloads folder as an .EXE file. Click the .EXE and follow the steps one by one.

- The latest international edition provides seven languages, including traditional Chinese, English, French, Japanese, German, Korean and Spanish. Now that you have installed QQ International, you need a User ID to log in.

- Run QQ and click “Sign Up.” Fill out the form and you will be given a verification email. Respond to the verification email and get a unique ID. Then you can successfully sign in to your account. You can change the interface to fit

your own taste.

- Basic Usage

- In the current version there is a function bar, including “main menu” “settings” “find friends” “web directory” “post wall” “message manager” and “file manager.” You can video or audio chat and send files directly through the QQ program. It also includes social tools and expandable third-party applications.

- Web Version and Smart phone version

- If you are using a public or work computer without QQ installed, you can still chat with friends on the web-based version of the program. Visit <http://web.qq.com/> , sign in with your ID and password and you can enjoy the same basic chatting functions as you would normally.

- If you want to use QQ for smart phones, you can search it in the markets for Iphone and windows phone or download it directly from the Internet for the Android system.

✧ Basics of WeChat

WeChat - weixin is quickly becoming the most popular social media in China. The number of users of WeChat reached more than 400 million in the first half of 2013.



- How to install “WeChat”

- Find the software “WeChat” or 微信 in simplified Chinese on the Internet (you can google or baidu it, also you can find it easily in App Store) and download it onto your mobile phone.

- Following the guide step by step to install “WeChat” on your mobile phone.

- Log in “WeChat,” using your mobile phone number as your account.

- Main WeChat functions

- Add contacts 添加朋友

To start the instant communication with your friends, you have to add your contacts first. Find the “add contacts” icon and search your friends’ mobile phone number, QQ number or WeChat ID.

➤ Voice messages 语音信息

The most convenient function of WeChat is that you can either text message or voice message.

➤ QR code 扫一扫

QR code is quite efficient to start a relationship with consumers. Users could just scan the QR code via their phone and they will be a member.

➤ Moments 朋友圈

Moments is a platform where you and your friends can share your experiences and emotions with each other.

➤ Shake 摇一摇

Shake your phone so you can be matched with others who are shaking too.

Caution: it is not recommended you give personal information to strangers as some of them may harbor dangerous orientations.

Medical Realities

There are some obvious differences on medical issue in China compared with that in other countries. We need participants and natural families pay special attention to the following hints and suggestions so that you can gain a better understanding of our standard practice when it comes to seeking medical attention.

1. Only several big cities have clinic or family doctor trial in China. When people get sick, generally they will go for help in hospital. We know that this is very different from the system in some countries where hospital visits would be reserved for emergencies.

So when you hear that your host parents would like to take you to the hospital, do

not be afraid. This is the most common way in China for people to seek Western medical attention. It might be not like what you are used to, but there will always be AFS volunteers, host family members, or host school teachers accompany and help you in everything. You do not need to handle it all by yourself.

Here we could show you some photos of Chinese hospitals with some explanation of what a Chinese hospital experience might be like:



This is a typical hospital in China

People have to register when visit the hospital, and sometimes there can be a lot of people waiting in the line.



To make sure that your host family members or AFS volunteers will be there to help you, please DO tell them about your illness at the very first time and ask them to take you to the doctor. Normally it will be the host parents who accompany the student to hospital. But if they cannot take time during the working days, the school teachers and local volunteers will take this responsibility.

In further, we suggest all the hosted participants always take the contact information of your host family (including parents and host siblings if applicable), liaison and school coordinator.



For minor illnesses, doctors will give the diagnosis at the outpatient service center. Doctors might not be so good in English. But AFS Volunteers will be present to help with translation if needed.



Sometimes you may be asked for blood test or other kind of examination just as you might in your home country for running tests.

You might also need to wait in the line for the medicine. AFS volunteers will be there to help you as well.



If you have a more serious condition, you may be asked to stay in the sickroom for some days. Once the doctor makes this recommendation, AFS CHN will make sure the Sending Partners being informed about the situation. If necessary, AFS volunteers will help you to

arrange someone who can help you communicate and understand everything that is going on.

2. Chinese people would seek care at a hospital even for a “small” illness like catching cold or diarrhea. That is not only because we trust a doctor to give us the

best advice, just as you might in your home country, but also because many prescription medicines cannot be bought over the counter in a pharmacy.

So if you get sick, your host family may wish to take you to the hospital to make sure you are alright. If you feel you do not need to see doctor, you should definitely try to have a discussion with your host family to communicate this to them. However, if you have not recovered after a couple of days, please take your host parents' advice to visit hospital. Otherwise, they will be very worried. They want to make sure you are healthy and safe.

3. Many people trust traditional Chinese medical science more than Western medicine, because they believe it is more natural and gentle on our bodies.

Sometimes your host parents may take you to see a Chinese physician, who may prescribe some traditional remedies with which you may not be familiar. Your host family would never give you anything to endanger your health. You may find, if you are willing to keep an open mind, that some of the remedies might make you feel better! However, if you really do not feel comfortable accepting traditional medicine, you could kindly ask your host parents to take you a Western style doctor.

4. Western medicine in China might differ from those in Western countries.

(1) For example, in order to shorten the period of suffering, Chinese doctors might suggest IV fluid rather than oral medicine, even sometimes it is only bad cold or amygdalitis.

If you do not like the idea of taking IV fluid or injection, please ask doctor whether there is another option. If the doctor considers it as the only best way, we suggest you listen to the doctor's recommendation.

(2) Another big difference is that Chinese doctor will always suggest you drink warm water rather than the cold or icy ones, and would be very much opposed to drinking beverages like soda, especially when you catch a cold or have something wrong in digestive system. We believe warm water helps one's recovery.

Of course we hope you take your doctor's suggestions. However, if you really cannot get used to the warm water, please tell your host parents in polite way so that they will not insist too strongly.

Romantic Relationship

The moral values of Chinese society are different from those of Western countries. Children have less independence and freedom. Parents, schools and even the whole society are very protective. This is extremely distinct on the topic of teenager romantic relations.

High school students are considered to be children. Dating or having a steady relationship with a member of opposite gender is not acceptable, let alone sexual activities. This kind of misbehavior will cause people around question one's character and moral trait.

Due to the conservative attitude in the whole society, schools and families are especially sensitive to this topic. Most middle schools and high schools have clear rules against the romantic relations between students.

In order not to make others uncomfortable or put your host family and host school into a difficult situation, we require all the hosted participants avoid those behaviors which could bring misunderstanding.

For example –

- ✧ Individual dating with opposite gender;
- ✧ Physical contact with opposite gender in public;
- ✧ Dress in an inappropriate way;
- ✧ Stay out late at night;



- ✧ Bring home particular friends of the opposite gender without the permission of the host parents.

Expense Paid by Participants

All host families in China are voluntary. AFS CHN DO NOT pay them in any way. So please not leave the impression that the host families and schools have received a great deal of Program Fee, for which any of your demands should be supplied. This really hurts our volunteers.

Except for the pocket money, there is something participants have to pay during the stay in China. We try to list them clearly beforehand in case of any unnecessary troubles.

1. Cost for Residence Permit

Except a few Partners who include this sum of money into the Asking fee, most students are responsible for the cost of Residence Permit.

2. Cost for extra-curriculum language course

In China the only official test for foreigners' competence of Chinese language is called HSK. AFS participants are encouraged to take part in this test in order to obtain a language certificate which is necessary for the future study in China. However, since the test is optional, the related cost, like those on books, instruction after class, application, transportation to the examination point and so on, is the responsibility of participants themselves.

3. Cost for extra stationery and instruments for culture lessons

Many hosting schools will provide special courses for exchange students to experience the Chinese culture, for example, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese painting, folk music and so on. Certain stationery and instruments like writing brush and cucurbit flute will be necessary. Students may have to pay for this cost by themselves.

4. Cost on school uniform

Each Chinese school has her unique uniform, which is different in price from other schools'. In most cases, this cost is not included in the hosting fee.

5. Communication expense and extra Internet cost

Daily communication expense like mobile phone and International call service is the responsibility of the participant.

Most Chinese families have Internet, but with limited flow rate each month. Participants are suggested to control the Internet use in the host family. However, if you do need the extra service, you will have to pay by yourself.

6. Cost on extra trips organized by school or AFS CHN

Each year AFS CHN prepares 2 optional trips while the local chapters and hosting schools even more. Participants are able to make their own choice and pay for them.

Estimated Cost of Living in China (10 months)

School uniform	¥ 400 (depends on school)
Day-trip with the school	¥ 350-650
Longer trip with the school	¥ 2000-4000
Language course (extra-curriculum)	¥ 2400-4000
Residence permit	¥ 400 or 800 (depends on region)
Personal spending	¥ 4000-8000
Other costs	¥ 1000-2000
<u>Total</u>	<u>¥ 12000-20000</u>

Something participants should avoid in China

- ✧ Being late for school
- ✧ Eating on the class
- ✧ Speaking without getting permission from the teacher
- ✧ Disrespect the Seniors
- ✧ Saying dirty words
- ✧ Speaking out ominous words like “death”, “illness”, “bad luck” etc during the Festivals, especially the Spring Festival
- ✧ Behaving too close to the opposite gender in public, like hugging or kissing

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: What kind of clothes should I bring?

A: You should bring clothes for all four seasons, that is, both warm and cold weathers. Do bring warm coats and clothes even you are placed in a southern area in China, because it is cold outdoors in winter and part of the southern area does not have heating equipment inside. You are also advised to bring sweaters for indoors in winter.

Q: How far is the host family usually from school?

A: It usually takes you half an hour or so to go to school by bus or by bike.

Q: Can I bring electronics to China?

A: The rated voltage in China is 220V. If you want to bring any electronics, check the voltage first. Make sure you can use them in China.

Q: Do I have to learn some Chinese before I go? Is Chinese classes provided for students?

A: You are advised to study at least some basic Chinese sentences before arrival. School usually provides 1-2 months of Chinese Language classes at the beginning of the program. If you want to further improve your language skill, you might need to pay by yourself.

Q: Do I have a chance to introduce my home country to my peers or host school?

A: Yes. Do prepare for giving lectures and presentations at host schools about your country.

Q: I understand the school and accommodation are free, but are there any needed expenses?

A: You need to pay about US\$50 for your school uniform and 400RMB obtaining resident permit locally. Personal expenses are at your own cost. You may also refer to the Estimated Cost of Living form.

Q: Are there anything I should do about the Physical Examination Form and vaccinations?

A: Do bring the Physical Examination Form (original one) with you. In China, some local epidemic prevention stations may accept your examination taken at home. If they do not, please bring about 300-500 RMB Yuan to pay for the new physical exams. Hepatitis B Vaccine should be injected before entering China.

Q: Am I expected to bring some gifts from home to my host family?

A: It is advisable that you bring your host family some small souvenirs preferably representing your home country or culture so that the distance between you and your family will be immediately shortened.

Q: Why does my host family never say no to me?

A: In great parts of Asia, there is constantly a consciousness called ‘saving face’, and China is also included. This ‘saving face’ or ‘mianzi’ in Chinese is close in meaning to decency or politeness. When a person is criticized or humiliated in public, he or she would feel ‘losing face’. Therefore, Chinese and Asian people would like to keep their words and actions implicative in order to ‘save face’ for others and for themselves.

Q: Why does my host family not give me as much freedom as I received in my home country?

A: In China, families and schools are very important for students. We have to admit that almost every student in China is largely under the supervision of his family and school. The school-family-student hierarchy is an established custom in China. The student’s personal freedom is to some extent rigidly restricted. There are many reasons for this situation and the major one is the College Entrance Exam. We advise you to talk with your host family and share your culture tradition with your host parents. In this way, you can reach mutual understanding with your host parents. Besides, Chinese families are always very concerned for their children’s safety and that’s why your host parents want you to return home early. Remember you are expected to obey family rules.

Q: How to adjust myself to a new culture?

- Focus on what I am good at;
- Give myself a break;
- Take good care of myself;
- Cultivate a new interest;
- Bring activities from home to share with others;
- Bring photos and memorabilia from home;

- Find some commonality with others;
- Try logically to figure out confusing or irritating situations;
- Keep my sense of humor;
- Be selective when choosing which other foreigners to interact with;
- Take responsibility for my own learning.

More useful books & websites:

Dream in Chinese, Deborah Fallows

Boya Chinese, Peking University Press

Travel in China

<http://www.echineselearning.com/http://www.cultural-china.com/>

<http://www.china-guide.com/culture/cuisine.html>

http://www.china.org.cn/travel/node_1000033.htm

<http://www.chinatoday.com>

<http://www.cnto.org>

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Emergency Number: +86-13501271982

Email address of hosting team: afs_hosting@chn.afs.org

In case of emergency outside of regular business hours, please call our emergency number to reach the AFS Duty Officer.

Staff List (Hosting and Support):

Ms. Dong , Jianwu	jianwu.dong@chn.afs.org
Ms. Liu , Xiaotong	xiaotong.liu@chn.afs.org
Mr. Xu, Xu	xu.xu@chn.afs.org
Ms. Deng, Liqun	liqun.deng@chn.afs.org
Mr. Ao, Nan	nanao@chn.afs.org
Mr. Chang, Di	di.chang@chn.afs.org

旅行申请表 APPLICATION FOR TRAVEL

Fill this form and itinerary → have it approved and signed by host family and school coordinator → ask the school coordinator pass it to AFS local chapter and then National Office → ask your natural family be prepared to sign the Travel Waiver provided by the AFS Office of your home country → wait for the decision from AFS China

*请核对附件: ☐1. 你的行程表(含交通及每日住宿信息) ☐2. 旅行联系人的护照或身份证复印件

*Attachment Checklist: ☐1. Your travel itinerary (include transportation and accommodation details)

☐2. The copy of the passport or ID Card of your contact person of this trip

申请人信息 Applicant					
学生姓名 Name		接待城市 Host City		来自于 Home Country	
旅行目的地 Travel to		旅行日期 Travel Dates		天数 Duration(≤10 days)	
旅行目的 Purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> 旅游 Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/> 考试 Exam	<input type="checkbox"/> 探亲 Natural family visit	<input type="checkbox"/> 其它 Other(Pls specify)	
同行人员信息 Travel Companions					
1		2		3	
4		5			
联系信息 Contact Information					
学生手机 Your cell phone		学生邮件 Your Email			
联系人姓名 Your Contact Person(over 21 years old) during trip		联系人手机 Contact person's cell phone number		联系人与学生关系 Relationship	

本人在此确认: 旅行中无论任何时候都不会在没有成年人监护下独立旅行。

I hereby confirm I will not travel independently at any point without adult supervision.

申请人签字 Applicant Signature: _____

注意(Attention)

1. 请参阅AFS规定中有关旅游的条目。 Please refer to AFS Travel Rules and Regulations.
2. 所有旅游申请表必须于出发前两周交到各AFS地方办公室。

Travel application must be submitted to AFS local office TWO WEEKS before departure.

3. 需在行程表中写明交通班次和住宿地址等详细信息。不允许独自坐夜火车及住宾馆。

Please provide train/flight and hotel information (name and address of hotel) in attached itinerary.
It is not allowed to take night train or stay in hotel without adult supervision in the travel.

4. 学校、地方办或全国办有权拒绝不符合要求的或存在风险的独立旅行。

School, local or National Office has right to reject the travel request that they consider inappropriate.

允许及签名:

Approved and signed by:

接待家长签名

Signature of Host parents

学校项目协调员签名

Signature of School Coordinator

地方办负责人签名

Signature of Local Office

Trip Itinerary (sample)					
Name		Gary Hoffman			
Day	Date	City	Spots	Accommodation*	Transportation*
1	2015/2/4	Beijing->Shanghai	Yuyuan Garden , the Bund	MingtownEtour Youth Hostel , 2 nights Add.:No.55 Jiangyin Rd, Huangpu District Tel.:021-63277766	Train G101 Beijing->Shanghai 07:00->12:37
2	2015/2/5	Shanghai	Nanjing Road Pedestrian Street, Pudong Financial Center		
3	2013/2/6	Shanghai	Xintiandi, Taikang Road (TianZi Fang)	Eric's hostfamily: Family Hu, 1 night Add.: No.41 Changle Rd, Huangpu District Tel.:021-63277788	
4	2015/2/7	Shanghai->Beijing	Jing'an Temple		Train G102 Shanghai->Beijing 07:00->12:37
*	Accommodation	Please fill in the name, address, tel. and number of nights of where you are going to stay.			
*	Transportation	Please provide the way of transportation (bus, train or flight), train/flight number, departure and arrival city and time.			

医疗报销信息表 *Medical Claim Form*

学生姓名 Full Name	性别 Gender	国籍 Nationality	地区 Host city	患病日期 Date
学校 Host School				
报销总金额 Total Amount		费用支付方 Paid by	学生 Student <input type="checkbox"/> 接待家庭 Host family <input type="checkbox"/> 学校 School <input type="checkbox"/> 地方办 Local office <input type="checkbox"/>	
报销类型 Item	费用合计 Amount			
挂号费 Registration fee				
治疗费 treatment				
住院费 hospitalization expenses				
疾病类型 Type of disease				
<input type="checkbox"/> 意外 Accident 详情 Detail: <input type="checkbox"/> 运动伤害类 Sports injury 伤害详情 In detail: <input type="checkbox"/> 疾病类 Disease: 疾病详情 In detail: 诊断结果 Diagnosis:				
收款人姓名 Name of payee				
开户银行名称 name of bank (请注明 XXX 银行 XXX 分行 XXX 分理处)				
账号/银行卡号 Account number				
经办人 (签字) Signature				