

To students who have religious affiliation, and their parents;

AFS Japan has been hosting students with different religious backgrounds and students in different religious beliefs, while our society is still not familiar with most of them except for our major religions, Shinto and Buddhism. In order to avoid misunderstanding and misguided expectation, please read the following explanations to find out realities in Japan for your preparation.

- Buying food that processed by certain religious means such as Halal and Kosher is almost impossible. Please do not expect your host family to buy such food for you. AFS Japan encourage host families to share what they usually eat with their hosted students. Food is an important part of the Japanese culture, and it is highly expected for you to eat whatever served.
- If there is anything you are not allowed to eat religiously, such as pork for Muslim and Jewish, and beef for Hindu and Mahayana Buddhism, please make sure to write them clearly in your AFS applications so that AFS Japan can inform your host family of your religious diet. Please be tolerant enough that your host family may eat what you are not allowed to, at the same table.
- Japanese host families will not use separate pans, pots, frying pans, cutting board, plates, forks, knives, spoons, and other kitchen utensils for you. You are expected to share the same kitchen utensils and dishes with your host family.
- If you are not able to eat meat in Japan due to religious reasons, but you will commit to eat fish, seafood, vegetables, eggs and dairy products in Japan, AFS Japan will look for your host families. This is as best as AFS Japan can do for you.
- You may be placed in a school with different religious background. If your host school is a Buddhist or Christian school, you may be asked to take part in their religious activities such as Christmas events. Your host school never expects you to convert your religion to theirs, but the school wants you to spend your school life with your classmates and take it as an opportunity to learn about different religions.
- You are not allowed to be excuse from classes for prayers at school. You may pray at your host family and make up for your prayers, but not at school.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact AFS office in your country.