

School expectations in BFL

As you may know, the Flemish school system is pretty demanding to most host students. School days are long and the students have to follow a fixed program without optional courses. Moreover, Dutch is not the easiest language to learn.

Therefore, we would like to share these school expectations with the (possible) participants. They can be important in deciding whether or not to come to BFL for an exchange. Or they can be a good preparation for the school program in BFL. Please inform students about these expectations. At the on arrival camp there will be a workshop on these school expectations.

If students really make an effort to reach these expectations, there are huge benefits. **We call them the 3F's: Freedom, Friendship and Fun!**

If they integrate well at school, make an effort to talk Dutch, do school assignments..., they will get freedom at school and from their host family, they will make a lot of friends and have fun staying in BFL.

These are 8 expectations

- 1. Be on time at school and in every lesson**

Schools in Flanders pay a lot of attention to being on time. Being late usually means no authorized absence. There is no break time during lessons, so students should hurry from 1 classroom to the other, together with their classmates.

- 2. Be present in every lesson**

In Flanders, playing truant or skipping classes is not allowed. Schools will contact host families if the student is not at school in the morning, and students can be punished if they skip classes during the day.

- 3. Have your material with you**

Students are expected to have their books, pens and paper with them in every class. If specific material is required (e.g. for physical education, art or cooking classes), there may be points on whether or not you have the material with you (attitude towards the course). At the beginning of the period, the students should put the material on their desk.

- 4. Make an effort to learn Dutch**

This is maybe the most important of all: if the student doesn't want to learn this new language, communication and integration will be very difficult! BFL provides a lot of opportunities to learn Dutch (Rosetta Stone, language lessons, language exercises booklet). Also host families and schools often provide more chances to practice, but their good will stops if the student doesn't want to make an effort.

- 5. Actively participate in class**

This is what schools expect from all their students, so also from AFS students! In the beginning participation can consist of small things: making notes, asking a question,

making language exercises, copying the board... Later in the year, also AFS students are expected to really participate in class discussions.

6. **Do assignments, homework, tests**

In Flanders, students get quite a lot of assignments during classes and at home. Also AFS students should try to participate as much as possible, but maybe in alternative ways (e.g. open book tests, copying notes, do only part of the assignment). It is important to talk to the teacher about what is possible.

7. **Make a school project**

In the second semester, AFS BFL expects of all the host students to make a school project in which the student compares 1element of the Flemish culture with that element of his/her own culture. The student presents this project to his/her class. In this way the AFS student gives some insights about his/her intercultural learning process back to the school. This creates an extra value for the hostschool.

8. **Participate in all final exams**

In the Flemish school system all students have exams in June. As a sign of integration, it is only logical that AFS students do the same as their classmates! Some AFS students even do so well that they obtain credits or a Belgian diploma.