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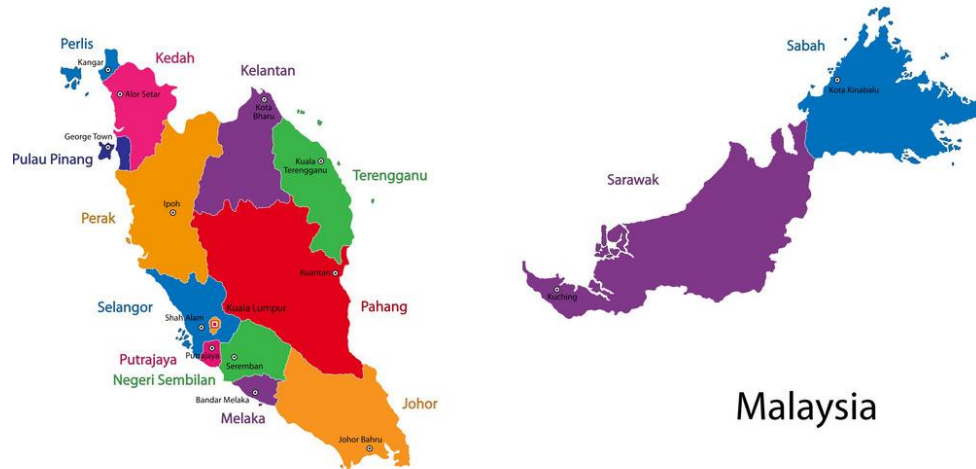
General Information

Where we are

Malaysia is situated in the south east of Asia just north of the equator. Our neighboring countries are Singapore lying in the south, Thailand in the north and the Philippines in the east.

Area

329,758sq km covering two regions. Peninsular Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak



Population and races

Approximately 23 million people.

Malays, Chinese and Indians are the main racial groups with diverse indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak



Climate

Warm and humid throughout the year.

Temperature ranges from 27°C to 34°C.

Annual rainfall from 2,000mm – 2,500mm and humidity is high the whole year round

Language

Official language: Bahasa Malaysia

Other spoken languages: Cantonese, Mandarin, Tamil and English which are widely used all over the country

Religion

Islam is the official religion. Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and other religions are freely practiced.

Time

13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and 16 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time, 8 hours ahead of GMT.

If your country has summer time, please pay attention to this.

Think about the time in your home country before you call your parents or friends. You don't want to wake them up at night.

Federal capital

Kuala Lumpur

45 minutes flying time from Singapore. 2½ hours from Bangkok. 2 hours from Jakarta. 13 hours from London. 5 hours from Perth.

Economy

A developing free enterprise economy.

Manufacturing forms the largest single component of the country's economy

A fast-growing country

Government

Malaysian comprises 13 states and two federal territories – Kuala Lumpur and Labuan (an island off the coast of Sabah). Nine of the states have a Hereditary ruler respectively from which the Supreme Head of State, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong (King) is elected every five years.

The government is based on parliamentary democracy.

The Prime Minister is the Head of Government.




Each state has its own Chief Minister or Menteri Besar who is elected to office and its own State Assembly.

Transportation

Local students get to school either by school or public bus, bicycle or the parents will send them. Since AFS students are not permitted to drive a car or motorbike while on the program, discuss transportation with your host parents.

There are ten rail services operating in Kuala Lumpur

Other transportations are the public bus, taxi, interstate train and interstate bus.

1		KTM LALUAN SEREMBAN KTM SEREMBAN LINE	
2		KTM LALUAN PELABUHAN KLANG KTM PORT KLANG LINE	
3		LRT LALUAN AMPANG LRT AMPANG LINE	rapidKL
4		LRT LALUAN SRI PETALING LRT SRI PETALING LINE	rapidKL
5		LRT LALUAN KELANA JAYA LRT KELANA JAYA LINE	rapidKL
6		ERL LALUAN KLIA EKSPRES ERL KLIA EKSPRES LINE	
7		ERL LALUAN KLIA TRANSIT ERL KLIA TRANSIT LINE	
8		LALUAN MONOREL KL KL MONORAIL LINE	rapidKL
9		MRT LALUAN SUNGAI BULOH - KAJANG MRT SUNGAI BULOH - KAJANG LINE	rapidKL
10		KTM LALUAN TERMINAL SKYPARK KTM TERMINAL SKYPARK LINE	

Mail rate

Weight	<20g	20-50g
Letters	RM0.6	RM0.7
Postcards	RM0.6	/

If you're sending a mail abroad, we recommend sending it by airmail. Otherwise it can take up to one month for arrival.

*Please check www.pos.com.my for more and updated rates.

Earning extra money

You may be interested in earning extra money to help with some of your personal expenses. However, under the conditions of your visa, you cannot be employed on either a full – time or part – time basis. You may accept informal occasional jobs such as babysitting or yard work. As an AFS student, you are not allowed to earn money to send home to your family.

Currency

The Malaysian unit of currency is the Ringgit (RM1 = 100sen). Currency comes in notes of RM1, RM2, RM5, RM10, RM50, and RM100.

Coins are issued in 5sen, 10sen, 20sen and 50sen denominations

US\$1 = RM 4.10 1 € = RM 4.73

For up-to-date conversion rates please check the internet e.g. www.oanda.com



Spending money in Malaysia

Malaysia is a reasonable country to live in, it is cheap, but you need to watch your budget! If your bank charges you for withdrawals abroad, it could be cheaper to open a local bank account. This will be helpful when your natural parents want to transfer money to you.

You are responsible for your own money!!! Do not let others keep your money!

- Compare the prices from back home. Ask your guest family and friends for local prices.
- Save some money before you go abroad, here you'll find a lot of things to try and discover.
- Keep track of your spending.
- Have a journal for your budgeting.

At least at the end of your year, you will learn a valuable lesson in spending habits and be more responsible with your money.

You may get some pocket money from AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia. Please check with the office staff on the amount as it varies from programme to programme.

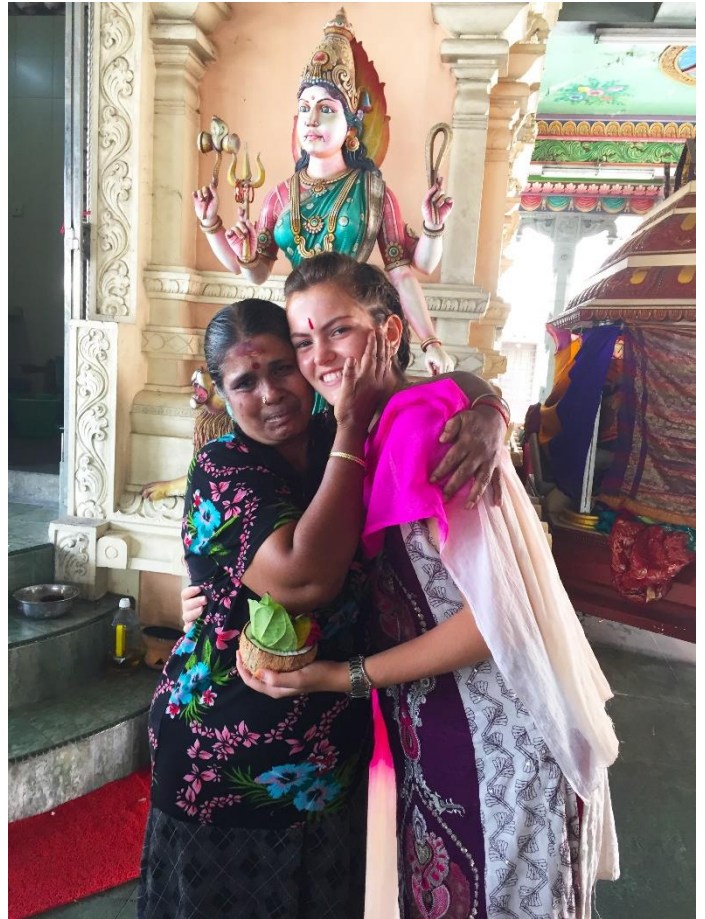
Sample of expenses:

- movie at the cinema RM9.00 – RM14.00
- music CD RM15.00 – RM50.00
- pair of jeans RM30.00 – RM250.00
- bar of chocolate RM7 - RM10

Malaysian family

Staying with a Malaysian family

1. You may have a room to yourself or you may share a room with a member of the family (females more likely share a room with a family member than man).
2. Do not grouch or laugh at the round the clock protection the family gives you. Your whereabouts, and the time you come home is something that the family wants to know regardless of what your age is. The curfew hours apply to everyone in the family.
3. Your idea of privacy may be radically different from your hosts. To isolate yourself in the room would be considered unfriendly and rude. If you need time to yourself like writing letters etc. do tell your family member and they will understand.
4. Malaysians have their own ideas of privacy too. These can be violated by a young person relaxing at home in flimsy attire, short pants, by horrors! Undergarments being hung on line outdoors. Find out where the woman in your house dry their unmentionables. This applies to menstruation too. Ask your host mother or sister how and where they dispose their sanitary pad / tampon.
5. Usually you will have to bring all your clothing and change in the bathroom. In some families a sarong or dressing gown is worn when you are going to the bathroom for your bath. It is safe to check with your family on the do's and don'ts.
6. Caution: Do not undress in the company of others, even if they are of the same sex.
7. Most Malaysian homes may have bathrooms with shower only or with a tap and basin in which water is stored. Do not immerse yourself in the basin. Use a plastic dipper to pour water over yourself. It is



normal to have a wet floor in the bathroom. Always check with your family where and when to take your bath.

8. Toilet paper may or may not be in the toilet. Many locals clean themselves with water. The left hand is employed in this task and that is the reason why it should never be used to handle food. The toilet may be a squat type or western type. Often rubber sandals are provided to be used in the toilet or bathroom.
9. If a bathroom is the only place where clothes can be washed do not take a long time to be in there. Consider others in the household who are also in need of using the bathroom. Always wear a dressing gown / bath robe or the versatile kain sarong to get in and out of bathroom for a bath.

Things to know about living with your Malaysian host family

1. Your host family is a very important part of your intercultural experience. You have come to live with them. So, you must share in the pleasures, the work and the responsibilities in their home life. Be part of the family, participate in their activities to establish a close and stable relationship. When you begin to adjust to living with them keep in mind these useful hints:
2. Since your cultures and theirs are different, ask about how things are done and do not guess. They can help you to understand things.
3. A word of thanks is very meaningful to your family. Show your appreciation towards them although they are generally not expressive.
4. Be prepared to be part of the family. As you get to know each other, you have to make the adjustment since you are in their home and learning their culture.
5. Ask about the family rules. Elders are to be highly respected and regarded.
6. If you expect to find differences rather than similarities, you will not be disappointed.
7. Initially you will make mistakes but always try to learn from them. If there are uncertainties, you need to ask a member of your family tactfully or your counselor or the office.

Values and manners

What constitutes good manners?

- In your culture you may consider it correct behavior to walk into someone's home with your shoes on, consider it friendly to shake hands with people different sexes you meet, pass objects with your left hand, hug and kiss when entering or leaving home and pointing with your fore finger. These customs are generally not acceptable in Malaysia particularly in a Muslim home.
- Making social blunders is a learning experience for you. AFS is after all an adventure in learning, so come with an open mind and do not leave that courageous spirit behind!
- A modest and humble attitude will help in communication and improve personal relationships between you and members of your host family and host community.
- Traditionally, Malaysian houses are made of timber, and blend into natural setting. These days families live in semi-western style houses, apartment, link houses, semi-detached or detached houses.

- Having and extended family living together is commonly practiced. When calling at a Malaysian house it is customary to stop at the bottom steps and announce one's presence or knock at the door and wait.
- Nobody walks through an open door uninvited; a man who does this is suspected of having bad intentions upon the women of the household.
- After being invited the visitors take off their shoes and leave them at the door. They will be shown a place to sit. Men usually assemble in the front verandah, women in the inner room. Friends of home-maker makes informal calls at the kitchen, but they would not enter until invited.
- Most of the time visitors will be served drinks and snacks without being asked. Most Malaysian would feel offended if food is being refused. It is better to try a bit than refuse.

Communication

- Host families will expect AFS students to try to be a close part of the family and to participate in activities. Host families in Malaysia are very interactive and when a student stays by him/herself a lot, the host family will think something is wrong. It is important for students to tell someone when they feel sad, lonely, and shy or have any feelings of uneasiness.
- Even if you are not used to talk about how you feel, it is important to do so.
- Interaction and communication are important in Malaysian host families.

Smoking and drinking

- For non-Muslims the drinking law is quite relaxed. Most teenagers only consume soft drinks: It's against Muslim faith to drink alcoholic drinks.
- Smoking is frowned upon among teenage or school going children. They are also not encouraged to frequent nightclubs, discos or pubs as this is an indirect indication of bad upbringing. The age limit for smoking in Malaysia is 18 years of age.
- Do not be tempted to go against this rule if your host family is adamant about it. The age limit to visit these places is 21 years and you can be in trouble with the law if you get caught.

Dating

- Dating is generally not encouraged young people do not usually go out in couples but go out in group. Most likely there will be social reunions. Get-togethers of a crowd of friends are more common.
- Body contact between different sexes is frowned upon. It is acceptable for men to walk with their arms on another man's shoulder and girls to hold each other's hand.

What gifts to bring

- Small presents for host families, teachers and friends would be appreciated. It is not important to bring expensive gifts. The list below is just a suggestion, but you can use your imagination. Basically, stick to something typical of your country.
 - Picture books or calendars
 - Handmade art and crafts
 - Place mats, coasters, towels
 - T-shirts, tie, pins etc.

Food, people, festivals, sports and recreation

Malaysia offers a range of mouth-watering food – spicy Malay dishes, an endless variety of Chinese food, exotic-cuisine from North and South India as well as the Nyonya and Portuguese food. Western cuisine is also easily accessible and there are many international fast food chains.

Chinese

The dishes mainly come from Cantonese and Hokkien kitchens.

All feature soup, meat, seafood and vegetables.

Exotic food such as bird's nest or yam pot dish



Malay

The dishes are generally spicy.

They resemble Indonesian and Indian cooking.

Most dishes are characterized by the liberal addition of spices, chilis (peppers), and coconut cream.

Satay is cubed BBQ chicken / beef dipped in hot peanut sauce eaten with squared shaped compressed rice and cucumber.



Indian

Famous for it's curries and chilies.

It is fun to eat rice on a banana leaf with your fingers.

There are more than 5 types of pancakes with different ingredients.

Milk and yogurt plus a variety of spices are always used in Indian cooking.

For dessert there is a wide selection of sweets made of condensed milk, sugree, and coconut cream.



Another interesting cuisine is the Nyonya or Peranakan cooking devised by Straits-born Chinese. Nyonya dishes are big on spices, chilies, lemon grass, belacan (prawn paste), and coconut cream. Portuguese food, however, is mainly based on sea food and plenty of chili. Very famous for its Devil's Curry!

A diversity of races, religions and cultures made up of Malaysia's 21.3 million people. The main groups are the Malays who form the majority and follow the Islamic religion, the Chinese who are mainly Buddhist or Christians and Indians who are mainly Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims or Christians. Then there are the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak – the Kadazan, Iban, Murut, Bajau, Kelabit, Dayak and many more. With these combinations of people and four major religions, it is hardly surprising that Malaysia enjoys many festivals.

Festivals

The major festivals are:

- * Hari Raya Puasa (Eid Al-Fitr) – to mark the end of the fasting of the
- * Fasting month of Ramadhan; celebrated by the Muslim.
- * Chinese New Year – the beginning of the year according to the
- * Chinese Lunar calendar.
- * Deepavali – The Hindu festival of lights.
- * Christmas

Apart from this there are the Hari Raya Haji (Eid Al-Adha), Hindu festival of Thaipusam, Chinese Moon Cake Festival and numerous harvest festivals in Sabah and Sarawak.

Sports and sporting events command a large following among people of all age groups. Soccer and badminton are the most popular games. Tennis, bowling, golf, squash, motor racing, swimming and horse riding are also loved by many.

Sea sports such as surfing, and jet skiing are gaining popularity while martial arts and traditional games like sepak takraw, giant top spinning and kite flying are pursued.



School in Malaysia

All schools in Malaysia follow a British education system in common curriculum and syllabus in order to develop a common identity and outlook to promote national integration. The medium of instruction is Bahasa Malaysia (Malay Language) but English Language is a compulsory second language.

There are public (government) schools in every suburb in each state and a few private and international schools in the capital city.

1. Primary School – Year 1 (Aged 7) to Year 6 (Aged 12)
2. Secondary School – Form 1 (Aged 13) to Form 5 (Aged 17) (O'Levels)

Below are descriptions of several people who work in the school system:

- * **Principal** – The principal has chief responsibility for running the schools.
- * **Teachers** – At most schools, students remain in the classroom while teachers move from class to class.

Primary and secondary education is compulsory. After Form 5, students may choose to proceed to Form 6 (A Levels) or enter college. After Form 6 they may apply for tertiary education.

Questions and Answers about Academics in Malaysian Schools.

1. Can I choose my secondary school?

No. Malaysian students attend the secondary school in their community. Rarely they can choose another high school. There are number of students that attend boarding schools nationwide. Your host family will suggest the secondary school that they intend to send you

2. Is there any dressing code when I go to school?

Yes. All students wear the national school uniform.

Female – a turquoise pinafore and white shirt or white long blouse and a long turquoise skirt.

Male – olive green long pants and white shirt. Canvas white shoes and socks in white.

You can get the school uniforms at US \$15-\$20 per set. What is available in the local market is made to fit Malaysian sizes and you may need a tailored-made uniform.

3. Do you have to pass an exam to move from one grade to the next?

No. There are no standard examinations which students must pass to advance from year to year or from primary to secondary school. There are two major examinations for secondary schools' students: - Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) for Form 3 students and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) for Form 5 students. These exams are to determine the universities and colleges entrance.

4. How long is the school year?

The school year is divided into 2 terms with a short holiday between them. Term holidays will be two weeks in March, three weeks in May, one week in August and seven weeks in November / December.

5. How will I choose my classes?

You can have preferences on what stream would you want to study (for example science stream, which consists of physics, chemistry and biology) and tell the principal on your first day of school. The school management will place you in the suitable class.

6. How long does one class last?

A typical class lasts about 40 minutes.

7. What are Malaysian classes like?

Normally the first 20 to 30 minutes the teachers will explain about the particular topic for that day and open the class for discussion and student's participation. During this time, teachers expect students to ask questions and contribute their own ideas and analysis. Class participation is a means for teachers to judge the students' understanding of the subject.

8. What is the homework like?

Most teachers assign homework daily. The homework may be reading, answering questions or writing a paper. Many times, the assignments are due the following day. However, larger homework assignments may be given a longer period of time to complete.

9. What are Malaysian exams like?

Examinations can include essays, short answer and multiple – choice questions.

10. How long is the school day?

School normally starts at 7.30am and ends at 2.00pm from Mondays until Fridays for all states except for the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah.

Since Friday is a weekend for these 3 states the school days will be from Sunday to Thursday. Break or recess time will be at around 10.25am.

11. How will I get to school?

In most areas of Malaysia, students ride school buses to and from school. Sometimes students will walk to school if they live close by, or the parents send them to school.

Sports and Activities in Malaysian Schools

12. I play sports back home. Can I play sports in Malaysia?

Yes, sports are very popular in Malaysia. Besides, it is a great way to make friends. Many students participate in extracurricular activities including sports (i.e. football, volleyball, softball, swimming, etc.), theater, debate, clubs for photography, chess, etc. Many of the sports activities, groups and clubs meet and practice after school hours. Some schools may have extracurricular activities on Saturday.

Introducing Yourself

People may have heard about your country, but you are here to make them understand more as well as to learn more about Malaysia. In most cases people will be interested to learn about you – your reactions, opinions and experience.

To introduce yourself, you may bring along a map, a flag, school year book, recipes, photo albums, songbook, dances and games. You may be asked to deliver a speech in school. People may ask why you are here.

Although Malaysia may not be your first choice, do give a tactful reply.

You may say that Malaysia may not be your first choice, but you are glad to be here.

More on Malaysian Schools...

It is compulsory for all students to attend school regularly. Try to learn the language rather than spend time chatting with your friends abroad. You should not wait for teachers and friends to motivate you, but you have to help yourself to make things work. Be more proactive.

Your participation in school will be a very important part of your experience due to two main reasons:

1. Your school has gone through the trouble to take you in and it hopes that in return you will contribute to the school. Remember you will not be able to be here without the school's consent to have you.
2. The school plays an important role in Malaysian society. It not only gives you knowledge but also helps the family in inculcating moral values and behavior. Teachers will take care of your welfare so do not hesitate to ask them for help. You are regarded as part of the team to build the good image of the school. Look for clubs and society to join.

All schools have extension rules for students. Some common ones are:

- * School uniform must always be worn.
- * Fingernails must be cut short and clean. No nail polish.
- * Hair must be short or tied / back for girls with long hair.
- * Hair must be short above collar level for boys.
- * No jewelry or make – up.
- * No ear piercing for boys.

Attendance at school is very important. Why?

- * Visa and Immigration regulations
- * AFS High School based program requirement
- * Certification of Exchange Year in Malaysia
- * Intercultural Interaction

Task and responsibilities at school

To adapt with the situation and environment at school Portray a good image of AFS and your own country You are required to present your country and AFS

Absenteeism from school will result in an Early Return without an official letter from:

1. AFS MAS
2. Host family
3. Doctor

AFS IN MALAYSIA

In 1958 Malaysia joined AFS and in 1986 AFS Malaysia officially changed its name to Antarabudaya Malaysia (ABM) to reflect a more Malaysian identity. It has a National Board whose members are elected every two years. A National Director and member staffs head the National office. The office address is:

Yayasan AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia
A-10-2, Block A, Plaza Glomac
Jalan SS 7/19, Kelana Jaya
47301 Petaling Jaya
Selangor, Malaysia

Tel: +603 7887 6866

Fax: +603 7787 5486

Online: www.afs.org.my

Facebook: www.facebook.com/afsmas

Email: info-mas@afs.org

Name of National Office staffs / Designations / Email Addresses:

Atty Sulaiman	National Director	atty.sulaiman@afs.org
Annie Yap	Asst. National Director / Chapter & Volunteer Management Manager	Annie.Yap@afs.org
Kautsar Ismail	HR & Finance Manager	kautsar.ismail@afs.org
Nani Taha	Program Manager	nani.taha@afs.org
Jasmin Melan	18+ & Fundraising Manager	jasmin.melan@afs.org
Zainal Izuddin Sharudin	Program Executive Hosting - School Based	zainal.saharudin@afs.org
Farah Niza Zulkifli	Senior Hosting Executive	farah.zulkifli@afs.org
Farah Nadia Samsuddin	YES Specialist	nadia.samsudin@afs.org
Sophie Ismail	Marketing and Program Development	sophie.ismail@afs.org
Kuhan Kandiah Chelvanathan	Training, Learning & Education Manager	kuhan.kandiah@afs.org

Emergency Procedures

For emergency cases after office hours, please call us at 017-285 6500. The Duty Officer will attend to your call or you can leave your message by stating your name and contact number and the officer will return your call. Please be reminded that only emergency calls will be entertained.

The office is opened from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Programs

AFS operates a variety of intercultural learning programs for adults and students in over 50 countries. In short, the mission of AFS is education at its broadest sense – education that reaches beyond the classroom to promote intercultural learning and understanding throughout the person to person exchange of ideas and life experience.

The AFS experience also prepares participants for career and life choices that reflect the growing globalization of nearly every human endeavor. AFS programs are based on the belief that recognizing and appreciating diversity is a natural outcome of the exchange experience. The learning and growth that results from that experience, AFS believes, thwarts intolerance, bigotry and fear-based hatred, and while at the same time fosters understanding, friendship and peace.

Today, it is estimated that more than 1,382 Malaysian Secondary school students have been on AFS programs abroad and about 1,426 foreign high school students had been hosted in Malaysia. AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia now has 10 chapters and 4 local contact persons who are mainly volunteers to help make AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia a success.

“Form me it was a great experience to go one year abroad. It was nice to see a new culture, get to know new things, meet new friends and to understand myself a lot better.”

Paul Piper from Germany 2011

“Malaysia offers an experience that hardly you will get in another country.”

José Andrés Cordero Solano from Costa Rica 2010

Mission Statement of AFS Malaysia

AFS Malaysia promotes global unity through people to people intercultural exchange programs

Vision & Values

AFS will be synonymous with quality intercultural programs preparing the youths of today to be cosmopolitan leaders of tomorrow.

AFS will project the image of a financially independent, professionally run body playing a proactive role in the creation of global citizens.

AFS believes that all participants, volunteers and supporters should at all time portray core values such as:

DIGNITY

INTEGRITY

EMPATHY

SENSITIVITY

TOLERANCE

Money Matters and how your money is spent in Malaysia

1. The fee that your natural parents pay to AFS goes to:
2. Pre-departure orientation in home country.
3. All AFS orientation camps in Malaysia and your host country
4. Flights & Taxes – To & from home country to host country.
5. International Extensive Insurance Policy (does not cover dental, plastic surgery or medical conditions that already exist or damage to other peoples' property)
6. Chapter level activities (EXCEPT OPTIONAL TRIPS)
7. 24 hours emergency support
8. Screening of host families
9. An experienced support system
10. Professional counseling and support if necessary.
11. Program administration and worldwide communication.
12. Post Arrival Orientation in home country
13. You may claim your medical expenses by providing the receipts to AFS MAS

The Beginning of your Experience

Upon Arrival in Malaysia...

You will begin your orientation with the other students from other countries. After the orientation is over, you will travel to your host community where you will spend your year.



Will anyone greet me at the airport?

Yes. AFS staff and / or volunteers will greet you at the airport and bring you to the orientation site. They will be either holding the **AFS flag** or **will be wearing an AFS T-Shirt** to get your attention. Please **DO NOT** take a taxi if you can't find our representatives at the Arrival Hall of the KL International Airport. What you can do is to go to the public phone and make a call to the National Office (during office hour) or our emergency number (after working hour) Emergency Contact: 017-2856500

What is an Orientation?

Orientation is a fun and useful event that allows you to meet AFS students from other countries who are in the same group as you are. AFS staff and volunteers will lead discussions about different aspects of life in Malaysia and AFS in your area. You will also review important safety tips on living in Malaysia. This event offers you an excellent opportunity to ask questions and learn more about your host family, host school, Malaysian culture, and your host community.

Will I have contact with AFS volunteers during my exchange year?

Yes. The AFS volunteers in your community are your connection to AFS. These volunteers form units called chapters. Each chapter provides support to you and your host family during your year in Malaysia. There will always be a contact person who is available to support you and your host family throughout your year.

AFS Malaysia Orientations – (Compulsory)

- Arrival Orientation Camp
- Delayed Orientation Camp – Chapter Level
- Mid Term Orientation Camp
- Short – Term Exchange
- End of Stay Orientation Camp

Arrival Orientation

Our volunteers or staff will meet you at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport upon your arrival. You will be taken to the arrival orientation camp and meet your other AFS's friends from different parts of the world. There will be a language orientation for you and other tips to prepare you for your one-year stay. Bear in mind that you will not be able to contact your natural parents for these two or three days. After the orientation you will join your host family.



Delayed Orientation

After about 6 weeks there will be a follow up orientation at the chapter level. It will be held in different places depending on your placement.

Short Term Exchange

We will give you the opportunity to see different places and cultures in our country by placing you in another host family for 2 – 3 weeks during the third quarter of your year here.



End of Stay

Before you depart you will have a 3 – 4 day of End of Stay camp. From this camp, you will have another 2 to 4 weeks with your host family before you leave Malaysia for your home country.

It is compulsory for students to attend all the programs organized by AFS.

What to Expect Upon Arrival?

Approached and confronted by a new language which you do not understand. Please get yourself an English to Malay Dictionary to expand your vocabulary as soon as possible.

Cultural differences – the simplest things can be very different – the way you say hello, table manners, the way you speak, the way you show your respect to your family and expectations in school. Asian families tend to be close – knit and schools are more conservative.

Be prepared to change your food dietary. Rice is the staple food. Try everything that your host family served you. Malaysian's usually like to give their guests a lot of food. Kindly decline their offer if you had enough to eat by stating that you are full.

The weather is humid & hot throughout the year. Please ensure that u drink enough water.

The dress code for the Malaysian weather is a typical summer attire. Nevertheless, cultural sensitivity should be practiced, whereby revealing attires are seen as inappropriate. In short, anything revealing above the knee is considered rude.



AFS Rules & Regulations

The AFS rules are very simple and easy to follow. However, if you fail to do so, you may be enroute home on an early return.

Causes for Early Return

Any of the following will be considered a reason for an early return.

- Breaking the Malaysian law
- Involvement with drugs, driving or hitch hiking
- Failure to abide by host-family rules
- Failure to abide by school rules
- Failure to abide by the travel rules
- Failure to abide by the AFS rules
- Person problems including pregnancy, anorexia or bulimia are usually best dealt by the natural family in students' home country
- Alcohol consumption

General Rules

Your parents and you have agreed to abide by AFS rules when you signed on to our program. AFS is authorized to act as your parents and guardians in any emergency, accident or illness. To ensure your safety these are the rules for you to follow throughout your stay in Malaysia.

1. No driving

No AFS students are permitted to drive a motorized vehicle. This includes motor cycles, cars, truck, scooter, jet-ski or any motor-powered vehicle. They also cannot fly a plane

2. No Drugs/ Abuse of Alcohol

The possession or use of drugs unless medically prescribed, is strictly forbidden. AFS and its students have no immunity from the law regarding the use of illegal drugs. It is also forbidden (under the Malaysian law) for people under the age of 18 to consume alcohol. However, family rules apply for AFS-ers above 18. Getting drunk is strictly forbidden and can cause you to have an Early Return.

3. No Hitchhiking

Students are forbidden from hitch-hiking.

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE MALAYSIAN LAW

Travel Rules

- You are only permitted to travel on commercial airlines or charter flight. If you intend to fly on other airlines or private planes, your natural parents must send a written permission to AFS before making the journey
- Before you travel (even with your host family), the travel form has to be filled, signed by your host parents as proof of their consent and has to arrive in ABM's office at least a week prior to the date of the trip. If the trip is organized by your host family and it is not planned, you need to call the office prior to your trip and leave your contact number for emergency purposes
- You are not encouraged to plan or make any independent travel unless there is an urgent need to do so but with prior approval from ABM and the rule #2 is fulfilled
- All overnight travel should be accompanied by an approved adult, but the National Office and your local chapter volunteers should be informed earlier of your travel itinerary, place of stay and contact number for emergency purposes
- You can only travel during school or public holidays
- You ONLY can travel abroad (Singapore or Thailand) with your host family. Only if the trip is approved by your host family (by signing a travel form) then a program waiver signed by your natural parents must be sent to ABM via AFS sending partner's office before the travel dates
- Your natural parents, natural relatives or friends from your home country are not encouraged to visit you during your stay here unless approval is obtained from your host family and ABM via AFS office in your home country. At no time will you be permitted to leave the host family to go on a trip or to visit them
- Obtaining permission is time consuming. You need to allow plenty of time for it)

Students are not here as tourist, so please make this exchange year worthwhile for you and AFS.

AFS office will issue a warning letter for any unauthorized travel which may cause an early return.

Forms and Waiver

1. Travel form

Students need to fill in this form when they travel overnight, either with the host families or local volunteers as long as the trip does not fall under AFS MAS Camps and Activities. This form is to be signed by the current host parents and send it back to AFS MAS office.

2. Visit invitation form for school holidays

Normally it comes together with the Travel Form and Program Waiver for Independent Travel. E.g. If the student plan to pay a visit to her STE family, they need to provide AFS:

- Travel Form with the current host parent's signature
- Visit Invitation Form for School Holidays with the signature from STE host parents
- Program Waiver for Independent Travel with the signature from the natural parents
- This is a supplement, where we still need your TRAVEL FORM!!!

3. Program waiver for independent travel

Independent travel waivers will be needed for students traveling alone without a member of the host families accompanying him / her. Waivers will need 10 – 14 days for processing as AFS MAS will have to contact sending partners as the natural parents need to sign on it

4. Sports / activity consent release and indemnity agreement

This waiver is needed if the program involves all kind of outdoors / risky activities (rafting, snorkeling, boating) and swimming (most Malaysian are not a good swimmer). We need approval from your natural parents.

5. Medical care report

Please take note that all AFS students are covered by the International Insurance. ABM and AFS International will bear the costs for the students' medical treatment required during the whole duration of the program. However, we do not cover any treatment required for pre-existing conditions or preventive purposes or dental or eye care. To get reimbursement from the office, kindly follow the guidelines:

- Upon seeing the doctor, have him / her completed the "Medical Care Report" (as attached)
- Take the form with you, pay the doctor's fee and get a receipt in English stating your name (or your host parent's name – whoever pay the fee) and the costs of the visit
- Make a photocopy of the "Medical Care Report" and the receipt for your own reference
- Send the "Medical Care Report" and the receipt to AFS National Office, addressed to the Hosting Coordinator
- AFS will send a cross cheque under payee's name for the reimbursement

For all AFS camps and activities, the travel form is not needed. The sports / activity consent release and indemnity agreement are needed for a high risk activities

Always let your host family know your whereabouts!

Tips making your first time easier

"Not good, not bad... just different Not right, not wrong... just different. "

- If you are living in a small town you will be observed frequently by the locals. Please be prepared to be "looked" at for the first few months.
- Two things most of us considered as 'my own business' are seen as public interest in small town: dress code and personal morals/ attitudes towards culture.
- To quote a Canadian Chinese woman who was a teacher in several parts of Malaysia; She said, 'The smaller the town the bigger the dress' which means it is more conservative in the smaller towns."
- Short or miniskirts, tight spaghetti strap dresses/blouses are not acceptable in small towns or in the big cities.
- A Muslim woman is expected to cover her arms, head and legs. Long sleeves shirts, trousers and sarongs are more acceptable. Conservative parents may be upset if the AFS student their child befriends wears an 'indecent outfit.' A female student who flouts these restrictions may find herself unattended, isolated by peers and society by large. This is also a cultural way of telling them they have to change.
- It is a big NO to consume alcohol in Malaysian homes.
- It is taboo to bring any non - halal food or pork into Moslem families
- It is culturally insensitive to consume beef in a Hindu or Buddhist house as cows are seen as a sacred animal.
- Bedrooms are not a private area. Family members can enter at all times, but your parents' bedroom is out of bounds.
- If you spot an interesting scene and you would like to photograph it, ask permission before you take a picture.
- Avoid eye contact with some people especially the opposite sex.
- A loud voice and angry swearing will be termed rude.
- Ownership, space, belongings, privacy (Malaysians keep private possessions locked away, otherwise you will find someone meddling with it or reading it)
- Diaries and letters may not be private property in some homes if it is left in a common area.
- Body contact between different sexes is frowned upon. It is acceptable for men to walk with their arms on another man's shoulder and girls to hold each other's hand.
- Be considerate with your expectations with the household items.
- It is important that the left hand is not used to hand things to others or to be used for eating - use the right hand.
- Malaysian toilet habits may differ from another country, so ask your family what the common habits are here.
- Our inner clothing is private and personal thus we should wash them ourselves and ensure that we are consistently hygienic.
- Clean and change your clothes daily; if you sweat a lot, wash them regularly to avoid any foul laundry.
- Brush your teeth every morning before breakfast.

- Bathing twice a day is necessary with the Malaysian weather, once in the morning and in the evening/ night.
- Dry and clean yourself well otherwise you may get rashes due to the humid weather.
- Do not undress in front of others because it is considered indecent. For guys, it is considered indecent to walk around the house topless or even with your boxers.
- Most Malaysians have a relaxed attitude towards time and punctuality. Please be prepared to wait for friends and family.
- In a tropical environment it is normal to see lizards and other insects at home.
- It is not unusual to find rat's outside/ inside the house and cockroaches in the kitchen or bedroom.
- It is impolite to sit legs apart, crisscross and to stretch your legs out when there are older people around. It is also seen as cultural incorrect.
- It is ill mannered to place your feet up on the table.
- Bend down slightly when you walk across in front of people.
- It is courteous to invite the elders or your guests to eat before doing so yourself.
- Make sure to remember that the food on the table is shared by all family members and be considerate and courteous.
- Rice is a staple food and lean meat (fish, chicken) is consumed daily.
- Never use your toe or feet to point at things. Never touch anyone's head since it is considered rude.
- Ask your parents how they want you to address them, DO NOT call them by their names.
- Don't stay in your room and be on your own, get involved in the family activities and help out.
- Don't flash your money to show that you have money, it may invite more trouble.
- Ask permission before using the phone or Internet in anyone's house. It is advisable to use Skype or other Internet phone software.
- Respect must be shown to elders either at home or at school.
- In school, student and teachers' relationships are different. Students do not call teachers by their first name, instead they address the male teachers SIR and the female teachers MA'M or TEACHER. There is not much physical contact and teachers are highly respected. Always speak in a respectful manner as teachers are highly respected.
- Spitting, sniffing, nose picking is very common, but nose blowing is not common in a public surrounding.
- Money – Usually one person pays for all but it is later reimbursed privately or the treat is returned some other time
- Ghost are frequently talked about especially in villages, so do not freak out.
- You are regarded as a child until you are married. Do not feel upset or antagonistic if you are treated like one, it is more the protective nature than anything else.
- Please be home before sunset.
- All footwear should be left outside the house, unless you have an agreement with your host family about it.

All the best to you. We're already looking forward to meeting you in Malaysia very soon!



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