

AFS-GPS

Visits From Natural Families

The AFS Participation Agreement, which is signed by all AFS students and their natural parents states:

“We understand that AFS does not encourage visits from family members or friends during the AFS Program. If family or friends plan to visit the participant, we agree to obtain consent in advance from the AFS national office in the hosting country. We also agree to abide by the hosting country regulations regarding the timing and duration of the visit. We understand that the AFS host country and the host family is not required to consent to a visit. In addition, we agree not to make any lodging or impositions on the host family during the visit.”

Visits from natural family or friends from home are often not a good idea. Through 60 + years of experience, AFS volunteers, students, and host families have learned that natural family visits are disruptive to the student’s exchange experience. For the student, the arrival of someone from home interrupts integration into their life abroad, as relationships and culture norms from home are resumed. For the hosts, visits interrupt their role as parents, may confuse and burden AFS volunteers and staff support structures.

If a natural family does visit, permission will not be granted until after the participant has been in the program for at least 5 months or are in the final month of their program.

During a visit:

- The stay should be for no more than three (3) or four (4) days total.
- Host family, local volunteers, AFS USA and AFS in country all must agree to the travel.
- Participants may not miss any school during the visit or to travel with family.

REFER TO PAGE 50 AND 51 IN THE HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS.