



# Focus on NEW ZEALAND School Program

*“Before I came to New Zealand, all I knew about New Zealand was that they have heaps of sheep and they love rugby. Well, when I arrived I realised that New Zealand has so much more, so much to see and so much to do.”*

*Ellimajja Kuitunen, participant from Finland*

*“When I arrived here, the first things that I noticed, were the vibrant colours: green like the grasses, blue like the sea and sky, white like the clouds and the mist. ....I love to learn new cultures and traditions, like the New Zealanders and the Maori.”*

*Carolina Chiappe, participant from Italy*

New Zealand consists mostly of two large islands. The North Island has volcanoes, hot springs, mud pools and geysers; the South Island has rugged Alpine mountains. This spectacular scenery beckons both visitors and Kiwis (as New Zealanders call themselves) to go “tramping in the bush.” In fact, most Kiwis are drawn to exercise and sports. Their eagerness to test themselves, for example, led to the commercializing of bungee jumping, first at home, then elsewhere throughout the world. Socially, New Zealand is dominated by two cultures — European and Maori — and each influences the other: Maori generosity and hospitality, for instance, soften European reserve. Though this mingling of cultures is on-going and usually benign, it’s one of New Zealand’s chief social issues.

## ***AFS & Your Experience***

AFS New Zealand has been in existence since 1947. More than 1,000 AFS volunteers in 39 chapters across the country work hard year-round to provide the most satisfying intercultural experience possible. Each year, AFS New Zealand hosts approximately 600 students from at least 34 countries.

AFS will be at your side throughout your intercultural exchange. Even before leaving your home country, you will participate in organized AFS orientations and have the assistance of experienced AFS volunteers. Once in your host country, you can rely on your local volunteer contact and other chapter volunteers to support you in your experience. Together we will ensure that you have an incredible experience abroad.

## ***Landing in New Zealand***

When you land in Auckland, one of New Zealand’s largest port cities, you and your fellow AFSers will collect your baggage, pass through customs and be met by AFS New Zealand staff and volunteers.

## **Arrival and Gateway Orientation**

Upon arrival, a one-day and overnight orientation at a nearby camp in Auckland will give you a chance to relax, get to know the other AFSers in the program and learn about AFS in New Zealand and New Zealand culture. After the orientation, you may be picked up by your host family or you will travel by plane or bus to your host community.

Gateway orientation will be held on a regional level four to six weeks after you arrive. By this time, you will be getting used to life in a new country and may have many questions to ask. Most nights finish with a show where each country group performs a dance, song or skit from their homeland.

## ***Living in New Zealand***

### **Lifestyle and Family Living**

The way of life in New Zealand is generally relaxed and informal. On the whole, New Zealanders (known also as Kiwis) are self-reliant, practical people, who love to work around their homes and gardens. It is not uncommon for both parents to work outside the home. Children and parents share the housework, and you will be responsible for keeping your things in order. Almost all families have pets living in the house.

Most placements are in rural or provincial areas rather than in large cities. New Zealand host families, like AFS host families worldwide, are not paid. They open their homes to students in order to share their community and culture as well as to enrich their family lives. Through communication and open relationships they will accept you as a part of the family. Your family will expect you to inform them where you are spending your free time and who your friends are, and they will try to understand how you feel. Most families are a mixture of European, Maori, Asian or Polynesian descent.

### **Dress and Appearance**

New Zealand teenagers like to dress casually, so jeans, T-shirts, pants, shorts, skirts and shirts are in order. On special occasions more formal dress is expected. Warm clothing is most suitable. Take a bathrobe, several warm sweaters, a winter jacket, a raincoat, boots, sneakers and sandals.

Most schools require a uniform. Please bring US\$150 to cover this cost. You will also need a pair of sturdy brown or black lace-up leather shoes. Some chapters will help you cover the expenses or offer a second-hand uniform. Make-up and jewellery are not permitted in schools, and piercings are not allowed.

### **Diet and Meals**

The New Zealand diet is varied. Dinner is the main meal in the evening. Breakfasts usually consist of cereal, fruit, toast and yogurt. Most students take sandwiches and fruit to school for lunch. In the past few years, Asian influences have influenced New Zealand cuisine. Many families cook Asian-style curries and stir-fries for dinner.

The most traditional meal is the roast. It is a large joint of meat—a leg of lamb, topside of beef, pork or a chicken—roasted in the oven. Side dishes can include potatoes, pumpkin, yams, *kumara* (New Zealand sweet potato), parsnip, onions, boiled cabbage, peas and gravy. The traditional Maori way of cooking food is called *Hangi*, where meat

and vegetables are baked in an underground oven for several hours. This is only done for special occasions.

New Zealanders love barbecues. They are proud of their *fish & chips* take-outs and thanks to a wide variety of ethnic groups, culinary arts are increasingly diverse. Vegetarianism is growing in popularity among young people, although it is not yet common.

### **School**

New Zealand has both public and private schools. Most AFSers are placed in public schools in Year 12 or Year 13 (second-to-last or last year) with classmates ages 16-18. School runs from late January to early December, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Three holidays, in April, July and September, last two weeks each. A seven-week summer holiday begins in early December.

You will choose among a wide range of subjects to study. In addition to traditional subjects such as English, science, mathematics, history and art, you may have an option to take such studies as tourism, outdoor recreation, agriculture or catering.

You can obtain a transcript and/or certificate of attendance if you attend classes regularly, complete your course work and pass the exams. Your school's policy will determine which record you can receive. External exams would be your expense.

All schools run activities outside of the classroom. You can join sport clubs, Maori cultural groups, sing in a choir, play in an orchestra or band or act in theater productions.

### **Teen Life**

New Zealanders love both the outdoors and sports. Almost every young person is involved in some form of sport. Favorites include rugby, cricket, soccer, basketball, netball, hockey and touch rugby (rugby without physical contact). You can also get involved with water sports, including surfing or rafting, or other extreme sports. New Zealanders take pride in their netball team—the Silver Ferns—and the world's best rugby team—the All Blacks (which must defend its title in the 2003 Rugby World Cup).

In addition to their passion for being active, New Zealanders' other interests include music, movies, festivals, theater, shopping or just meeting friends in cafés or at social gatherings.

Kiwis are influenced by various cultures. Fashion, jewellery, decorations and crafts, for example, reach deep into Maori traditions. The Maori proudly preserve their unique culture, contributing to New Zealand as a whole. Some of their traditions, which you will learn by living in New Zealand and be invited to practice, are the *Haka*—a traditional war challenge performed only by men—and the *Powhiri*—the traditional Maori welcome, which involves *hongi*, a greeting that involves pressing noses as opposed to kissing.

### **AFS Activities**

In addition to an orientation at your arrival, AFS New Zealand will provide you with several others. AFS orientations are a chance for participants to meet (normally for a weekend) and talk about both expectations for the future program and past experiences. Orientations involve participating in group activities and goal-setting. Sessions usually

provide new information and ways of looking at things while also allowing participants to share points of view. AFS orientations are social, interactive and educational; bringing together young people from many countries and helping them to better understand their own intercultural learning experience.

You will attend a local orientation held on a weekend about six weeks after arrival, which will allow you to catch up with your friends, share your experiences and ask questions. AFS pays the cost of this orientation.

AFS volunteers will organize several activities for you during your stay. These may include informal get-togethers, weekend outings, picnics and camping trips. There is also an optional mid-stay orientation camp.

Finally, there is the End-of-Stay camp, a time to get together with other AFSers before you return home. The End-of-Stay camp is about looking back at your exchange and sharing memories with other AFSers. It is also about thinking of the future. This regional event is compulsory for all AFSers, AFS pays the cost of this orientation.

### **Language**

Even though New Zealand's official language is English, it sounds different from British, American or Australian English. New Zealanders have their own accent, sayings and slang. *Maori* (related to Tahitian and Hawaiian) is the language of the Maori, who were the first migrants to New Zealand. Approximately 160,000 New Zealanders speak Maori. Many Maori words are used daily, and many place and street names are in Maori, too.

### **Travel**

Although it is natural for you to want to travel while in New Zealand, 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 New Zealand. We strongly discourage travelling on your own or with friends.

You will have the option of taking a bus tour of the North Island or South Island during the September or April school holidays at a cost of NZ\$1,300.

### **Spending Money**

Host families are asked to 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 that US\$1,700 should be sufficient for an entire year. You can open a bank account so that your natural parents can send you money during your program. All major credit cards can be used in New Zealand.

An additional US\$1,200 will be needed if you choose to participate in the optional bus trips.

### **Safety and Support**

During your stay, local AFS volunteers will be available to assist you as you learn to live as a New Zealander. In the event of an emergency, AFS staff can be reached 24 hours a day by you in your host country and by your natural family at home.

For the welfare of participants, AFS worldwide has two rules: no driving and no use of drugs for non-medicinal purposes. Any student who violates either of these rules will be automatically sent home. AFS New Zealand may have additional rules.

### **Health Precautions**

In addition to the precautions mentioned above, AFS suggests that you discuss the health recommendations for New Zealand (which you can get from your government or easily find on the Internet) 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 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. Updated childhood immunizations are required. An injection of immune globulin against hepatitis A is recommended.

### **Documents**

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 your host country. Visas are obtained through the consular offices of your host country, and requirements often vary from consulate to consulate.

Consulates charge fees for their services, and obtaining your visa can be a complicated and lengthy process requiring a great deal of paperwork, patience and persistence. AFS will help you obtain the visa and provide you with instructions regarding the required documents.

### **Program Prices**

Please [contact the AFS office in your home country](#) for information about program price and scholarship possibilities and what the program price covers for the various program offerings. In most cases the program price covers the following: round-trip international travel with your AFS group; travel in the host country to your host family; travel from your host family to your international departure point; AFS's medical plan; placement with your host; orientation in your home country and your host country; 24 hour emergency assistance in your home and host countries; a global medical assistance organization to support extreme emergencies; a network of trained volunteers who support you throughout your experience.

In order to keep costs low and provide good service, AFS utilizes a network of volunteers and staff in 50+ countries around the world. Volunteers need training, support and assistance from professional staff in each country. Other expenses you will normally need to pay in addition to the program price: passport and visa fees, required inoculations, expenses for eyeglasses, contacts and dental care, school uniforms (where applicable) and personal spending money. Your housing and food are provided by your host family as part of their commitment to our program.

## ***Country Information***

### **Geography and Climate**

New Zealand is about the size of the state of Italy (268,021 sq km). It consists of two main islands located in the southern Pacific midway between the equator and the South Pole. The North Island is the more populous and has fertile agricultural land, the largest man-made forest in the southern hemisphere, snow-capped volcanoes, hot springs, mud pools and thermal geysers. Located on the South Island, the Southern Alps provide magnificent scenery and opportunities for sports. There are many glaciers, lakes, rivers, fjords and coastal plains. Both islands have many sandy beaches.

The climate is temperate, with plenty of sunshine, adequate rainfall and few extremes of weather. Average temperatures are 8°C (46°F) in winter to 17°C (63°F) in summer. Summer starts in December and the winter season in June.

### **Population**

New Zealand has a population of 4 million. Wellington, located on the southern tip of North Island, is the capital and has a population of 330,000. Europeans make up 80% of the population, Maoris 14.7% and Pacific Islanders 6.5%.

### **Language**

English and Maori are the official languages of New Zealand. English is used in day-to-day business. *Maori*, the indigenous language (related to Tahitian and Hawaiian), was recognized as an official language in 1987. It is spoken by 160,000 inhabitants. Many Maori words are used in everyday speech, and many places and street names are Maori too.

### **Government**

New Zealand is an independent and self-governing member of the British Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, the official head of state, is represented by a Governor-General. The prime minister is the head of government and is responsible to a unicameral legislature. New Zealand is a unitary state; there are no provincial or state governments.

### **Religion**

Seventy percent of New Zealanders are Christians (Anglican, Catholics, Presbyterian, Methodists, and Baptists); most of the rest have no religious affiliation.

## ***Launching your AFS experience***

Evaluations by previous participants support our belief that those students who prepare prior to leaving have the best experience. In order to get ready, first make every effort to learn some key English words and phrases so that you arrive with at least some basic knowledge of the language.

To familiarize yourself further with life in New Zealand make use of your local library and/or the Internet. A lot of general information is available about New Zealand and its culture.

Although each participant's experience is unique, we strongly suggest that you speak with a recent AFS participant to New Zealand. This person will be an excellent resource regarding living as a New Zealander. If you do not know any alumni, please contact

your local volunteer or national AFS office. In addition, AFS New Zealand will provide you with a special packet of country-specific information.

New Zealanders will be curious about your home community. You may be surprised to learn how much they already know about your country. Therefore, it is also helpful to be as informed as possible about current events in your community and country.

If you have not already received a full AFS application packet, please contact your local AFS volunteer or national office to request one. We wish you a wonderful experience!

### Curiously from New Zealand

- The longest place-name still in use is Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenua kitanatahu—a New Zealand hill.
- Kiwi birds—a national symbol—are flightless, nocturnal and unique to New Zealand. Because of their mixed features, they are called sometimes “honorary mammals.”
- Kiwi is also a popular term for a New Zealander.
- New Zealand is the only country that contains every type of climate in the world.
- New Zealand was the first country to extend the vote to women.
- New Zealand has a national Tattoo Museum. *Moko*—Maori tattooing—has a long tradition. Facial decorations were not only tattooed but incised into the skin to make scars in the form of parallel ridges and grooves. All men, except slaves, were tattooed. It was a pride of warriors and attractive to women.

### How to Apply

To become a participant in this country's School Program, contact your nearest AFS office. To locate an AFS office, go to <http://www.afs.org/contact>

Student age (upon arrival)	16y to 18y	No graduates accepted
Country data	Size	268,021km <sup>2</sup> 104,440 mi <sup>2</sup>
	Population	4,012,600
	Official languages	English and Maori
	Government	Parliamentary democracy
Currency	New Zealand dollar divided into 100 cents.	
Useful website	<a href="http://www.purenz.com">www.purenz.com</a>	
AFS website	<a href="http://www.afsnzl.org.nz/">http://www.afsnzl.org.nz/</a>	

AFS program destinations are not always available to residents of all countries. If a program interests you, please contact your nearest AFS office to find out if it is an option for you. You can locate your nearest AFS office at <http://www.afs.org/contact>