



Dear Future AFSer/Applicant and Parents,

Please find enclosed general instructions on obtaining a **Study Visa** for New Zealand. **AFS will obtain this visa for you.** As you will note, obtaining a visa is a detailed and time consuming process, and for this reason, visa information is sent not only to students who are guaranteed, but also to students whose applications are still in review. It is important that you begin preparing for this process immediately. Failure to submit your documents by the deadline might lead to you having to travel late or even not being able to participate in the program altogether. Any extra cost incurred due to your late submission of documents will be your responsibility.

Obtaining a Passport

If you still do not have a passport, you must apply for one **immediately!** You cannot obtain any other type of travel or residence authorization without a valid passport and it will take approximately 4-6 weeks to obtain one. If you delay in obtaining your passport, you will need to request that your passport application be “expedited” (rushed) which will mean an additional cost.

Additional Support Documents

In order for AFS to obtain your visa for New Zealand, along with the completed visa application and other documents required by the New Zealand Embassy, we will also need additional support documents and approvals which are provided by AFS-New Zealand and the New Zealand Government. These documents are issued in accordance with new requirements of the New Zealand Ministry of Education and are only made available when your school and family placement information has been confirmed. **AFS- New Zealand will prepare these documents and forward them to the AFS USA office in New York as soon as your placement has been confirmed. AFS USA will then immediately apply for your visa.**

The process of obtaining the necessary approvals and documentation for this process can take time and in some cases, possible delays may result. If your documentation does not arrive within adequate time to obtain a visa, you may have to travel later than originally scheduled. Staff in the National Offices of both AFS-USA and AFS in New Zealand will continue to monitor the situation closely in the up coming months. Be assured that AFS- New Zealand is doing everything possible to have all placements confirmed as early as possible. In addition to this, visa and immigration regulations are constantly changing. **Participants who we feel may**

not be able to travel as scheduled will be notified approximately two weeks prior to the original departure date.

Domestic Travel

Regarding your domestic travel to the gateway orientation site, please do not book any tickets until you receive what we call the *Travel Notification Packet* in the mail from the AFS USA Travel and Logistics Department. This packet will give you important detailed information about travel and logistics for your trip. AFS always recommends that participants book domestic tickets that are both refundable and changeable. This is due in part to the possibility of changes in international flights students will be taking to return home, but also due to the fact that complications may arise in obtaining visas and these complications can at times delay a student's departure. (Sometimes people want to use frequent flier miles to purchase their domestic ticket, but these may not be flexible if you need to change the date for any reason.) **Please note that participants will be responsible for paying any penalties incurred for changes they may need to make in their domestic travel in the event that they are not able to obtain their visa in time for their scheduled departure.**

Taking Trips before the Start of Your Program

You should not plan any excursions outside of the United States during the two – three months prior to your program. As mentioned before, obtaining a visa takes time and your passport will be required. Should you choose to travel before the start of your program and not allow enough time for AFS to procure your visa, you will run the risk of not being able to participate on this program.

Getting Started

We have included here some additional information concerning the visa application process for New Zealand. AFS will obtain this visa for you. It is very important, however, that you follow the accompanying instructions very carefully and comply with all the requirements.

Should you have any questions or require assistance, do not hesitate to contact your **Admissions Advisor in Portland at 800-237-4636.**

Sincerely,

AFS Visa Team



VISA INSTRUCTIONS

NEW ZEALAND YEAR AND SEMESTER PROGRAMS 2008-09

A visa is required for your entry and stay in New Zealand. **AFS will be obtaining your visa for you.** To do so, we **MUST** receive the following items from you **as soon as possible or no later than June 2nd**. Please follow these instructions carefully, as any errors or omissions will delay the process thus possibly jeopardizing your travel arrangements.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO SEND AFS:

1. UNITED STATES PASSPORT: *Yes, you must send your actual passport. The visa is a sticker which the Embassy will affix to one of the free pages in your passport.*

If you hold a passport from a country other than the US, please call your Admissions Advisor **IMMEDIATELY** at 1-800-237-4636. Additional documents may be required.

If you do not yet have your US passport, you must apply **RIGHT AWAY**. You can not apply for a visa without a valid passport. In some cases, you may have to expedite (a rush service) your passport application at an additional cost. Normal processing time may take 4-6 weeks excluding peak seasons. You can inquire at your local post office about where you can apply.

Your US passport must be:

- **SIGNED** (An unsigned passport is not considered valid)
- **VALID FOR 6 MONTHS** longer than the duration of your exchange.

2. VISA APPLICATION: (enclosed)

Complete application in full. Please refer to the sample application. If you do not have your host family and school and travel details please leave the spaces blank. AFS will complete the application for you when it becomes available.

BE SURE TO SIGN AND DATE THIS APPLICATION WHERE INDICATED

3. ONE (1) PASSPORT-TYPE PHOTO:

- Snapshots, digital prints or machine photos are **not** acceptable.
- Write your name on the back of the photo.

4. PARENTAL CONSENT FORM: (enclosed)

This form is required for all students **under the age of 18**. BOTH parents **listed on your birth certificate** must sign this document. Please refer to the Parental Consent Form Fact Sheet for further information.

THIS FORM MUST BE NOTARIZED BY A NOTARY PUBLIC

- 5. LEGAL COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE:** The New Zealand Embassy requires students who are **under 16** to provide a legal copy of the birth certificate to show relationship of parties concerned along with the consent form. A **notarized** copy of the original birth certificate will suffice. If the names of the parents on the birth certificate are not the same as on the parental consent form, documents must be presented to explain the reasons for this. (Again, please refer to the Parental Consent Form Fact Sheet for more detailed information).

Please send the above items to us **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** or **no later than June 2nd**. Please use a traceable mail service such as UPS, DHL or Federal Express and remember to retain your tracking number. *Do not use regular, certified, priority or delivery confirmation mail. The US Postal Service will not be able to locate your package should it become lost in their care.* Please send these items to:

AFS-USA

International Documents/ New Zealand NH08
One Whitehall St., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10004

**YOUR PASSPORT AND VISA WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU AT
YOUR GATEWAY ORIENTATION.**

Before sending your passport, remember to retain a copy for your records. Please check with your airline carrier for an alternative form of identification for domestic travel.

If you have questions regarding these instructions, please do not hesitate to contact your **Admissions Advisor in Portland, OR at 800-237-4636.**

AFS will apply for your visa. Visa requirements, issuance regulations and fees are established by government authorities and/or consular officials, who reserve the right to make changes at any time. Please note that AFS cannot intercede to revoke decisions made by these authorities. Therefore AFS is not responsible for any changes in requirements or fees that occur after we have provided you with these instructions.



AFS PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (PCF) FACT SHEET

Many consulates/ foreign governments require proof that the legal parents have given their permission for their minor child to travel abroad without them. This is done in order to avoid problems with runaways, international custody battles and other lawsuits. Generally, Both natural parents must sign the PCF. Both signatures must be notarized by a Notary Public.

Students Over 18

Students who will be over 18 one month before departure need not submit a PCF, except for countries where the legal age is higher (in Argentina, Japan and Chile, the legal age is 21).

Divorced Parents

Both parents must sign if they were granted rights of visitation. If visitation rights were not granted, and a photocopy of the divorce papers are submitted as proof of this fact, then only the custodial parent need sign the PCF. Copies of the parental consent form may be made to be signed and notarized by each custodial parent separately.

If the parent has full custody and the absent parent needs written permission to visit the child then the signature of the non-custodial parent is not required. Legal proof of this situation must be presented to the Consulate.

The divorce decree must be reviewed to assure that the visitation situation is clearly spelled out. If the non-custodial parent has not taken advantage of the visitation rights, and has no contact with the child, a statement from a lawyer must be presented (see AWOL section in this document).

Name Differences

When parents use a different last name from the child, consulates often feel insecure about whether the signer is in fact the parent of the child. Name difference may occur because:

- Mother has remarried.
- Mother is using her maiden name.
- Child never took father's name.
- Child is using stepparent's name.
- etc.

The most common document to submit in such a case is a photocopy of the divorce decree but in some cases the child's birth certificate showing parents names, name change paper (copy of marriage license) or adoption papers will suffice. In selecting a document, remember that the purpose is to establish that the signer is the natural parent of the child.

Living In Different Cities

If one parent does not live at home photocopy the Parental Consent Form and send a copy or copies to the absent parent. If AFS is obtaining the visa the form can be sent to AFS directly. If the student is obtaining the visa through the Consulate of Jurisdiction the form must accompany all other documents. It is acceptable for a parent to draw up a facsimile form. The facsimile must include a statement to the same effect as that on the AFS form, and it must be notarized.

One Parent Deceased

The surviving parent must sign the PCF and attach a photocopy of the death certificate.

Both Parents Deceased

The legal guardian(s) of the child must sign the PCF and attach proof of legal Guardianship. Copies of the death certificates may be required.

Stepparents

Unless they are legal guardians of the child through adoption or custody agreement, Stepparents must not sign the PCF. Legal guardianship must be documented.

AWOL

If one parent is missing or completely out of touch, a recent notarized affidavit from a lawyer should be submitted to the effect that the absent parent has been out of touch for a significant period of time. Even with this documentation, it is uncertain that the consulate will issue a visa in this situation.

If there are any questions about any of these issues please contact AFS at 1-800-237-4636.



PARENTAL CONSENT

Date: _____

I/we the parent(s) of _____
(Name of student)

grant my/our permission for my/our _____
(Son/daughter)

to travel between the USA and **New Zealand** under the auspices of AFS
Intercultural Programs.

Signature

Signature

Print name

Print name

Sworn before me on this day of _____

Signature of Notary Public

My commission expires on _____
Date