



Dear Future AFSer/Applicant,

Please find enclosed general instructions on obtaining a **Student Residence Permit** for Finland. **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. Visa documents submitted by you later than the deadline (see below) might result in your traveling late or not being able to participate in the program. You are responsible for any additional cost incurred by your late submission of documents.**

### **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 Finland, along with the completed visa application and other documents required by the Finnish Consulate, we will also need additional support documents and approvals which are provided by AFS-Finland. AFS-Finland 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 Finland will continue to monitor the situation closely in the up coming months. Be assured that AFS-Finland 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. **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 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 Finland. 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 at 800-237-4636.**

Sincerely,

AFS Admissions Team



## VISA INFORMATION

### FINLAND YEAR /SEMESTER PROGRAM 2008-09

A residence permit is required for your entry and stay in Finland. **AFS will obtain this permit for you.** In order for AFS to obtain your visa, we must receive the following items from you **as soon as possible or no later than MAY 15<sup>th</sup>**. Please follow instructions carefully, as any errors or omissions will cause delays, which will jeopardize your travel arrangements.

1. **UNITED STATES PASSPORT** *Yes, you must send AFS your passport since the visa is a stamp that the consulate will affix to one of its free pages.*

- **Signed** and valid at least through six months after your return to the United States.

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.

2. **TWO ORIGINAL PASSPORT PHOTOS**

- Snapshots, digital prints or graduation pictures are not acceptable.
- Please write your name on the back of each photo.
- Size: 1 3/8" x 1 7/8", head between 1 1/4" x 1 3/8"

3. **VISA FEE of \$79.00**

- This fee must be a **money order** or **certified bank check** made payable to **the Consulate General of Finland**.
- The consulate will **not** accept personal checks.

4. **APPLICATION FOR RESIDENCE PERMIT, FORMS (OLE 1 and OLE 4)** (enclosed)

- Please type or print all information **clearly** in the spaces available.
- Put "Not Applicable" where it is appropriate.
- Be sure to sign and date the visa application forms where indicated!

5. **Parental Consent Form** (enclosed)

- This form must be signed by both parents.
- The signatures must be notarized by a Notary Public

Please send the above items to us **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** or **no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>**.  
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/ FIN-NH08  
One Whitehall St., 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10004

**NOTE:** Please do not call AFS to check if your documents were received. AFS will contact you in case something is missing or if documents are not received in time. You can also check with your carrier to see if the package was delivered.

**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.**

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.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions, contact your **Admissions Advisor at 800-237-4636.**



## **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

Sending country: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

I / We \_\_\_\_\_ the

parent(s) / legal guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ give

my / our consent to my /our son/daughter to travel between Finland and the USA

under the auspices of AFS Intercultural Programs and to apply for a residence

permit in Finland for the school year 2008-2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

Sworn before me on this day of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stamp and Signature of Notary Public

My commission expires on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date