**AFS Liaison Pledge**

The role of liaison is foundational to the success of every AFS student’s program. Given the importance of this role, AFS USA asks all liaisons to fulfill this role in a timely and diligent manner in accordance with this AFS Liaison Pledge. A summary of liaison responsibilities appears below, and more detail is provided in the Appendix. We encourage liaisons to refer to this document from time to time to ensure their role is completed in accordance with the Pledge.

I agree that I will fulfill the role of the liaison to the best of my ability in order to improve the AFS experience for my AFS student, host family, school, and community. If I am unable to fulfill these responsibilities, I will contact the [Liaison Coordinator] on my Area Team right away. I understand that the role of Liaison includes:

1. **Monthly contact with Student and Host Family.**  Both the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and the U.S. Department of State require that AFS document and maintain at least monthly contact with every participant and every host family. I understand that my monthly contacts will fulfill that requirement and help ensure the student is safe and having a productive experience. Some of my contacts must be in-person.

2.  **Contacts with the School during the year.** AFS requires that I (or another volunteer on my team) contact a school official such as a guidance counselor. For year program students, three contacts are required. For semester students, I must make two contacts with the school. Timing of the visits is as posted on MyAFS. Contact with the school allows me to monitor the student's academic performance and identify any potential issues that could affect the student, host family, or school.

3.  **In-home visit within 30 days (Welcome family) or 60 days (Permanent family).**  The Department of State requires that AFS conduct a special visit or visits to a host family's home at the beginning of the student's placement there. For permanent placements this is a required one-time visit by me that must take place within the first 60 days. For temporary or welcome placements, the initial visit must take place within the first 30 days and then recur every 30 days until a permanent placement is found or that placement becomes permanent. I understand that 30/60 day In-Home Visits cannot be completed by me if I completed the host family interview.

4. **Other Contacts and Documentation**

a. Other, more frequent contacts and documentation may be required of me should any issues arise with respect to the student, host family, or school.

b. I will document contacts on MyAFS in an accurate, complete, and timely manner pursuant to the instructions set out by AFS and our team. At a minimum, documentation is required every calendar month that the student is on program and must be submitted before the end of the month.

5. **Mandatory Reporting.** I must notify (fill in name of Support Coordinator or other volunteer) if I have concerns about the health and well-being of a student. Serious concerns must be reported to AFS staff (and by them to the Department of State and local authorities as appropriate). A list of those concerns appears in the Appendix.

I understand thatAFS-USA, along with all J-1 visa secondary school sponsors, undergoes a Department of State Management Review (audit). This audit covers all areas pertaining to host family and volunteer screening as well as on-program support of our students. Auditors randomly select and then review monthly contacts. Liaisons with missing contacts will be asked to consult their notes, diaries, phone logs, etc to document a missing contact and failing that will be asked to find others with liaison training who were in contact with the student and can document a missing contact.

Furthermore, I recognize that when a student experiences a serious incident while on program that must be reported to the Department of State, the student’s file and all host family and student monthly contacts will be reviewed by the Department of State. In this situation, the same process of identifying any missing contact as during the audit, will apply.

Consequences of failing the Management Review (audit) could include AFS being required to develop a corrective action plan, sanctions against AFS, a reduction in the number of students we are allowed to host, or revoking AFS-USA’s status as a J-1 visa sponsor altogether.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX (To be included based on team discretion)**

**AFS Liaison Contacts and Visits Responsibilities**

**Student Monthly Contact** - [Here](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/115015865288-Host-Student-Contact-Form) is the form to review before your contact  
**Requirements**:  
Contact with the student in every **calendar** month they are here  
In person during the calendar month of the student's arrival.   
If not meeting in-person one month, then by phone is OK (texting or email doesn’t count for the monthly contact)

**Best Practices:**

See the student in-person as much as possible

Always talk to them away from the rest of the family for part of the visit.

Make sure the student understands you are there to support them (and the family)

Do the contact early in the month, especially since covid exposure could jeopardize a visit late in the month

Do something fun with the student - go out for a meal, have ice cream, go to a fair, etc.

Document the contact the day you see the student. This can be done by phone ([iphone](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/115011432228-Adding-MyAFS-to-your-iPhone) or [android](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/360005369313-Adding-MyAFS-to-your-Android-Device))

**Host Family Monthly Contact** - [Here](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/115015790167-Host-Family-Contact-Form) is the form to review before your contact  
**Requirements:**Monthly contact, either in person or by phone (texting or email doesn’t count),   
In-person (can be in the home or out of the home) once a semester

**Best Practices:**

See the family in-person, often.

Always have some time with a parent away from the student and other children so they can speak freely

Do things to relieve the load on the host family by driving the student to an event, attending back to school night for them, taking the student for a weekend to your home (but that requires your home to be vetted as an Event or fully screened host family)

Talking to one parent is sufficient, but always nice to talk to both parents

Document in MyAFS the day the contact is made with the fully screened host family

**In-Home Visit -** [Here](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/115015869508-In-Home-Visit-Contact-Form) is the form you’ll fill outWithin 60 days of arrival in the US for permanent placements  
Within 30 days of arrival for Welcome or Temporary placements, and every 30 days thereafter until the placement become permanent or the student moves to a new family  
Also counts for that month’s contact with student and family if they are both home and you speak with both of them  
Done to check conditions in the home including bedroom, bathroom, living area  
Cannot be done by the same person who did the initial home inspection  
Best done well in advance of the 30 or 60 day deadline

**School Contact -** [Here](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/115015790587-Host-School-Contact-Form) is a copy of the formYear program students: required three times a year (Aug-Nov, Dec-Feb, Mar-May)   
First semester students: required twice (Aug-Nov, Dec-Jan)   
Second semester students: required twice (Jan-X, Y-June)   
Can be with anyone who works at the school and knows the student, so could be with a teacher, counselor, administrator, or coach  
Can be done in-person, by email, by phone  
Can be done by one volunteer for all students in the school  
See additional Best Practices and FAQs [here](https://myafshelp.afsusa.org/hc/en-us/articles/231539588-School-Contacts-FAQs-and-Best-Practices).

**Mandatory Reporting**  
AFS-USA volunteers are required to immediately report any serious concerns about the health and well-being of AFS participants to the appropriate support volunteer on their team and, if that volunteer is not available, to AFS-USA staff. AFS-USA is required to promptly notify the US State Department of any unusual or exceptional incidents that may bring the Department or AFS-USA into notoriety or disrepute. Additional situations that must be reported to the US Department of State, and local authorities as appropriate, include, but are not limited to:

* Allegations that the host family has taken or misappropriated the student’s money or credit cards
* Incidents involving the criminal justice system (police, child protective services, law enforcement, etc.)
* Patterns of behavior problems (substance abuse, aggressive physical contact, severe bullying, etc.)
* Mental health issues (eating disorder, cutting, suicidal ideation, suicide attempt, etc.)
* Host parent substance abuse
* Threat of negative press, foreign government or embassy involvement (incident expected to bring DoS or the exchange visitor program into notoriety or disrepute).
* Events involving serious bodily injury or death
* Events, alleged or actual, where the student is the victim or perpetrator of sexual assault
* Public events or natural disasters directly involving student safety (school shooting/violence, earthquake, tornado, flood, etc.)
* Missing/runaway students longer than 24 hours
* DoS or the exchange visitor program into notoriety or disrepute).
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