

# AFS Chile Welcomes You!



*Conectando Vidas, Compartiendo Culturas*



## 2016

# AFS CHILE

<b>1. A BIT OF HISTORY</b>	5
<b>2. GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION</b>	6
a. THE NORTHERN DESERT	6
b. THE CENTRAL VALLEY	7
c. THE LAKE REGION	7
d. THE ARCHIPELAGO - THE FAR SOUTH	8
<b>3. CLOTHING</b>	8
a. NORTHERN REGION	9
b. CENTRAL VALLEY	9
c. LAKE REGION	9
d. FAR SOUTHERN REGION	9
<b>4. LANGUAGE</b>	10
a. PRONUNCIATION	10
b. GRAMMAR	10
<b>5. CHILEAN PEOPLE</b>	11
a. CLASS STRUCTURE	11
b. WOMEN IN CHILE	12
c. RELIGION	12
<b>6. THE CHILEAN FAMILY</b>	12
a. TRADITIONAL VALUES	13
b. FAMILY GATHERINGS	13
c. NANAS (maids)	14
<b>7. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY</b>	14
a. HELPING IN THE HOUSE	15
b. BATHING	15
<b>8. YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	15
<b>9. MANNERS</b>	16
a. PUNCTUALITY	16
b. GREETINGS	16
c. PERSONAL SPACE	17
<b>10. MEALS</b>	17
a. BREAKFAST	17
b. LUNCH	17
c. ONCES	18
d. DINNER	18
e. SNACKS FROM THE FRIDGE	18
<b>11. HOUSING IN CHILE</b>	19
<b>12. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM</b>	19
a. YOUR SCHOOL	20
b. SCHOOL UNIFORM	21
c. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	23

d.	GRADUATION ACTIVITIES	23
<b>13.</b>	<b>HOLIDAYS IN CHILE</b>	23
a.	AÑO NUEVO	23
b.	SEMANA SANTA	24
c.	DÍA DE LAS GLORIAS NAVALES	24
d.	FIESTAS PATRIAS	24
e.	NAVIDAD	25
<b>14.</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA</b>	25
e.	TELEPHONE	26
a.	MOBILE OR CELL PHONES	26
<b>15.</b>	<b>AFS CHILE</b>	27
a.	ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES	28
b.	TRAVEL TO HOST COMMUNITIES	29
c.	STUDENT SUPPORT	29
d.	SPENDING MONEY	30
<b>16.</b>	<b>TRAVEL DURING THE YEAR</b>	31
a.	VISIT FROM RELATIVES AND FRIENDS DURING THE AFS PROGRAM	31
b.	TRIPS WITH MEMBER OF THE HOST FAMILY AND HOSTSCHOOL	32
c.	TRIPS TO AFS ORIENTATIONS AND/OR AFS ACTIVITIES	32
d.	SIGHTSEEING TRIPS WITH AFS .....	33
e.	INDEPENDET TRAVEL	33
<b>17.</b>	<b>THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND</b>	34
a.	DRINKING	34
b.	SMOKING	34
a.	CORRUPTION AND DRUG TRAFFICKING	34
b.	MEDICAL EXPENSES	35
c.	ELECTRICITY	35
<b>18.</b>	<b>AFS GOLDEN RULES</b>	35
a.	DRUGS	35
b.	DRIVING	36
c.	HITCHHIKING	36
<b>19.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	36

## **SAFETY TIPS**

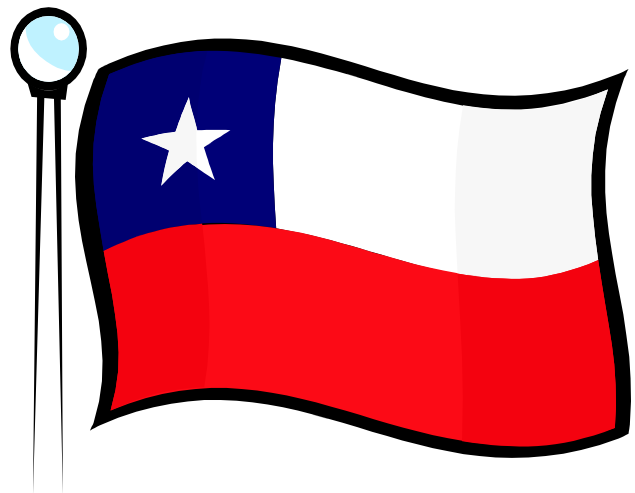
<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	39
<b>2.</b>	<b>IN AND AROUND THE HOME</b>	40
a.	HEATING	40
b.	HOME SECURITY CHECKLIST	40
c.	EARTHQUAKES	41
d.	WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF AN EARTHQUAKE	41
<b>3.</b>	<b>OUTSIDE THE HOME</b>	43
<b>4.</b>	<b>CITY AREAS TO AVOID</b>	43

<b>5. STAYING OUT LATE AT NIGHT</b>	43
<b>6. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION</b>	44
<b>7. CURRENCY AND MONEY</b>	44
<b>8. UNCOMFORTABLE SOCIAL SITUATIONS</b>	45
<b>9. ILLEGAL DRUGS</b>	45
<b>10. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES</b>	46
<b>11. THE LAW</b>	46
<b>12. DRIVING AND HITCHHIKING</b>	46
<b>13. SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b>	46
<b>14. EMERGENCIES</b>	48
a. THE POLICE	49
b. FIRE DEPARTMENT	49
c. NATIONAL EMERGENCY	49
<b>15. CONCLUSION</b>	50

## AFS Chile

Congratulations on having been selected to come to Chile to live as an AFS student. We are very glad you will be coming. During the time you spend with us in Chile, you will learn very much about our country, its problems, hopes and culture. We hope you will make many Chilean friends and that you will come to feel that Chile is like another home for you. We, at AFS CHILE, will have many chances to talk with you while you are here. We look forward to getting to know you! We want to remind you that AFS is your friend, and that we, at AFS CHILE, will always be willing to help you.

Please read carefully all the information included in this booklet as it will prepare you for much of what you will experience in Chile. Pay special attention to the sections on climate and clothes to bring!



## A BIT OF HISTORY

Before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16<sup>TH</sup> century, many indigenous groups, including the Aymaras, Atacameños, and the Picunches, populated Chile. The Incas dominated the northern and central regions, while the Araucanos predominantly occupied the southern region. Unfortunately, many of these groups were virtually wiped out with the arrival of the Spanish through war, slavery, and the subsequent policies of the newly founded Republic.

The extreme south of the country was home to other groups such as the Huilliches, Pehuenches, and the Alacalufes. Due to the severe cold weather many of the indigenous wore large pelts wrapped around their feet. The explorers referred to them in Spanish as *Patagones* (big feet), and that is how the region became known as *Patagonia*. When Magallanes sailed through the strait that now bears his name, he and his crew saw bonfires used by the people for warmth and cooking. They called the area ***Tierra del Fuego*** (Land of Fire), which is how such a cold region earned such a hot name.

In 1541, Pedro de Valdivia founded the city of Santiago, the present day capital of Chile. A colony was established, but it remained rather unimportant because of the lack of silver and gold. An agricultural economy developed, and the area experienced relative stability until tension between Royalists and Separatists led to the war for Independence in the early 1800's. Chile won its Independence from Spain in 1810 under Bernardo O'Higgins and an Argentinean, José de San Martín. O'Higgins was dictator until 1823, and his policies laid the foundations for a modern state with a two-party system and a centralized government.

The past century was witness to many changes in the Chilean political system. In 1970, Salvador Allende became the first freely elected Marxist president in the Western Hemisphere. Unrest ensued within the country, and

on September 11, 1973, he was ousted in a military coup, which left General Augusto Pinochet as leader of the country. Pinochet ruled until 1990, when he stepped down in favor of Patricio Aylwin, who was elected President in free elections.

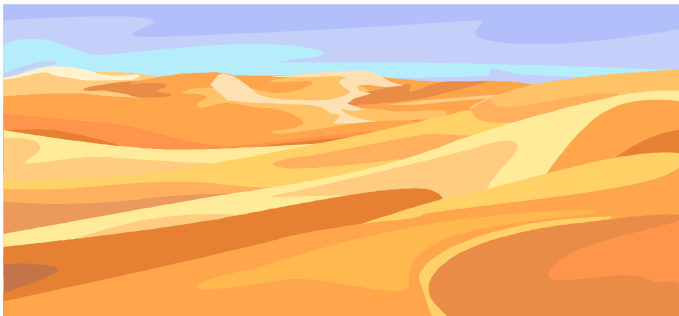
Chile is now a stable Democratic Republic. The current President is Mrs. Michele Bachelet, the first woman ever in our History who has this position, now in two periods, from 2006 to 2010 and now from 2014 to 2018.

## 2. GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

Look at a map of the world. Once you have located South America, you will see the longest country in the world. Although Chile may look like a small country, it is as big as the state of Texas in the US, and twice the size of Japan. In all, Chile is 4.200 kilometers long (2.610 miles) and only 177 kilometers wide (110 miles).

Chile can be divided into four geographical regions:

### a. THE NORTHERN DESERT



Here you will find vast areas of desert land with little vegetation. One area in this region (the Atacama Desert) is the driest place in the world. This entire zone is very rich in mineral deposits, especially copper, sulphur, nitrate, and potassium. This northern desert extends from Arica in the north to Coquimbo/La Serena in the south. Winters are dry in this region, and the days are mild. During June and July (our winter months), mornings and evenings are quiet cold. Summers are sunny and warm, but not too hot

because of the cool breezes from the Pacific Ocean. The temperature on the coast in the summer averages only around 20°C (68°F).

### **b. THE CENTRAL VALLEY**



Sixty five percent of Chile's approximately 14 million people live in this fertile region. It is considered the economic and political center of Chilean life. The capital of Chile, Santiago, is located here. The land in this area is very fertile; consequently, agriculture is a very important activity. The most important agricultural products are wine, fruit, lumber, and rice. The Central Valley is also where most of Chile's industry and manufacturing are located. Winters are cold, especially during June and July, when temperatures range from freezing up to around 15°C (59°F). Mornings and evenings are especially cold. Winters in this region are usually very rainy. It almost never snows, except in the mountains. Summers are hot and dry. Summer temperatures can reach as high as 35°C (95°F), although the average summer temperatures decrease closer to the coast. This is where the rich soils, essential for producing the grapes for Chile's famous wine, can be found.

### **c. THE LAKE REGION**

This area is known for its beautiful and abundant lakes and rivers. There is a lot of farmland in this area. Corn, wheat, and beans are the primary crops cultivated. Cattle raising are also practiced on a small scale. There are many forests in the lake



region, which are used in the lumber industry. Because of the many beautiful and unspoiled lakes and rivers in this region, people from all over the world come here for sports-fishing and recreational tourism. This is also the region where most Araucanian Indians still live (the indigenous who once inhabited



all of Chile). It is estimated that in the whole country some 300.000 Araucanians remain. The lake region extends from Temuco to Puerto Montt. In winter, this region is extremely cold and rainy. Temperatures at night can easily fall below freezing. Summers are warm and pleasant, with average temperatures at 25°C (77°F).



## LAGO - THE FAR SOUTH

This is the southernmost region in Chile. It is a vast and scarcely populated area. Less than one percent of Chile's population lives in this region which extends from Puerto Montt to Punta Arenas. This region is mostly islands and mountains covered by dense forests. To this day, much of this region remains untouched by humans. Summers are very brief. As you might have guessed, winters in Chile's far south are very cold, windy, rainy and snowy. Most often winter temperatures hover around freezing or below. But beware!

The wind chill factor can make it feel much colder.

## 3. CLOTHING

A brief, but helpful, description of the climate of each of the four regions has been given for you above. Be sure to bring clothing appropriate for your area!

Keep in mind that if you are going to be with us for a year or semester, you will not need to bring too much clothing as you will be wearing a uniform to school every day. However, those of you who come on the short program will not be required to wear the school uniform, and so will need to bring

adequate school clothing. Here are some suggestions for what to be sure to include in your suitcase:

#### **a. NORTHERN REGION**

You will not need to bring rain or heavy winter clothing. Be sure to bring a lightweight jacket for the cool winter mornings and evenings.

#### **b. CENTRAL VALLEY**

Bring a raincoat and boots for the rain, a warm winter coat, parka, windbreaker, plenty of warm socks, sweaters, gloves, a warm scarf, and hat. Thermal wear will be very beneficial to you.

#### **c. LAKE REGION**

The suggestions are the same as for the Central Valley region. Be sure to bring clothes appropriate for cold and rainy days. This means plenty of wool sweaters, flannel pajamas, wool socks, etc. **\*Most Chilean houses are not centrally heated.** If it is cold outside, it is likely to be chilly inside. Bring clothes that will keep you comfortable in a house where the temperature may be as low as the upper 10°C (50°F). BE SURE to bring adequate rain gear- rain coat and boots. Bring thermal wear.

#### **d. FAR SOUTHERN REGION**

You will freeze if you do not bring appropriate clothing! Bring your warmest winter clothes: heavy winter coat, parka, warm wool sweaters, hat, gloves, boots, wool socks, scarf, long underwear, etc. Bring thermal wear!

## **4. LANGUAGE**

You may be surprised by the fact that, in Chile, people do not refer to the language they speak as **Español**, but rather as **Castellano**. Don't let this worry you. The two terms are equivalent. **Castellano** just happens to be the preferred term in South America.

Most people in Chile speak little or no English so it will be very important for you to learn Spanish. Your serious effort to learn Spanish will be greatly appreciated by your Chilean family and friends, and will enrich your AFS experience.

### **a. PRONUNCIATION**

Regional differences in the language of the Chilean people are remarkably slight, despite the country's varied geography and great length. There are, however, noticeable differences in accents based on socio-economic backgrounds. As in most countries, the upper classes, and the educated, speak a more refined language than the lower classes.

### **b. GRAMMAR**

One aspect of the Spanish language that makes it different from the English language is the division of pronouns into formal and informal. Every person you speak with in Chile must be classified into one category or the other. This is a tough call for many foreigners, especially, native speakers of English, who are not used to making this distinction.

The formal pronoun, **Usted**, should be used with all elders. This includes teachers and school administrators, grandparents, aunt and uncles, your friends' parents, and older strangers.

The informal, **Tú**, will be used with all of your peers, including host family siblings and cousins, classmates, and other young people you may meet.

There is no rule in the use of formal and informal in regards to the parents of your host family. You will need to follow the example of your host brothers or sisters. If you are unsure about using **usted** or **tú** with your parents, then the best idea would be to ask their preference.

## 5. CHILEAN PEOPLE

The first thing that you will notice about Chilean society is that it is very homogenous. The minority groups that do exist have either immersed themselves in the dominant culture, or have maintained their differences while remaining on the edge of mainstream society. Chileans generally regard themselves as one people.

You will also notice that Chileans are not like Latin people from tropical regions. Chile, like the other Southern Cone nations, is a relatively conservative society.

### a. CLASS STRUCTURE

The sharpest distinctions between Chileans lie in classes. Chile's early economy was based on agriculture and mining, and produced a society that was highly stratified according to income. Only a few families enjoyed wealth and power. However, increased social mobility has changed this situation in recent years, and now more people have access to the finer things.

In Spanish speaking cultures, each person has two surnames (**apellidos**). The first is the father's, and the second is the mother's (who does not change her name when she marries).

This tradition was originated to show both of the families from which a person hails. Today, many people use only their first surname for convenience, but both are legal.

### **b. WOMEN IN CHILE**

Chile is not the typical Latin *machista* society. Most men want their wives to work, and are proud of their accomplishments. In fact, statistics show that women have made great strides in Chilean society. However, a closer look reveals that even though women are taking advantage of higher education opportunities, and are becoming professionals, there are many women who continue to assume traditional roles. There is a great deal of pressure for women to marry, to have children, and to continue the concept of “family”.

### **c. RELIGION**

Latin America is perceived by the outside world as being one of the great strongholds of the Roman Catholic Church. This is valid to a certain extent in Chile due to the early introduction of Catholicism. Although



the Catholic Church plays an important role in Chilean society and politics, Chileans are still very tolerant and respectful of other people’s beliefs. It is not very difficult to find places where you can practice other religious affiliations.

## **6. THE CHILEAN FAMILY**

The Chilean family continues to be rather traditional in its values and customs. The father is generally the primary breadwinner of the family, and although many women work today, their income is considered supplementary. Because fathers spend much of their time at work, the children are usually closer to, and less formal with, their mother.

### **a. TRADITIONAL VALUES**

The preservation of traditional values within the family is considered very important. Young people are not encouraged to be as independent as in other cultures. They depend more on their parents for permission to go out, or to participate in after-school activities. Parents expect to be an authority over their children for a longer period of time than in other countries.

Another aspect of family life that is important to note is that boys and girls are sometimes treated differently. Boys are generally given more freedom, while their sisters are more protected. This is how things are done in Chile, and we hope that you will be able to adapt during the time you are here with us.

### **b. FAMILY GATHERINGS**

Life in Chile is very family oriented and centers around the home. Due to the high importance placed on family ties, many Chilean families are very tightly knit and spend a great deal of time together. For most families, it is very important to gather together at a certain time of the day to talk about each other's activities, or just to share time as a family.

Many families expect their children to put aside their individual activities, if they are not very important, in order to spend time with the family. Many families gather together on the weekends for meals. These gatherings often include extended family. Extended and immediate families always come together for birthdays and holidays.

The extended family also serves as a support network. Although Chile has a high percentage of poverty, there is relatively little homelessness. The main reason being, that families will frequently take in members who have fallen on hard times.

### c. NANAS (maids)



Working mothers are not faced with the same childcare problems as women in other countries. Because labor is relatively cheap, many upper and middle class families hire **nanas** (or **empleadas**), who work as both nannies and housekeepers. Many middle and upper class families have live in **nanas** which are available at almost any hour if needed.

Women from the lower income bracket either leave their children with relatives, or use neighborhood day care centers.

## 7. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

You will find your host family doing a great deal for you in the first few weeks of your stay. They will go out of their way to include you in whatever they do. As time goes on, however, they will grow accustomed to having you in their home, and will fall into a daily routine. The interest that you show in your family's daily activities and the gratitude and affection that you express will help to develop a positive, long term relationship.

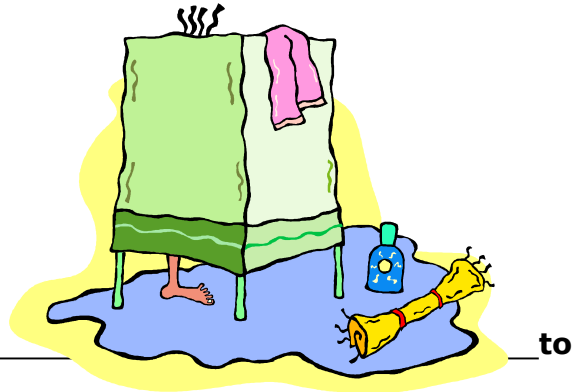
Previously we explained that Chilean parents tend to be strict with their children. You should be prepared for the fact that you will be included while you are living here. You will be expected to follow the rules of the household. This includes asking for permission to go out and respecting imposed curfews. It will be very important for you to keep your parents informed of your whereabouts. If you are going to arrive home later than expected, you should call to avoid unnecessary worry. Remember that all of this is simply the Chilean tradition. You shouldn't be offended, nor think that they don't trust your judgement or maturity.

### a. HELPING IN THE HOUSE

Although many families have hired help for the housework, young people are still expected to help. It is a good idea for you to offer to help with simple chores like helping set the table, taking dirty dishes to wash, making your bed, and tidying your room.

### b. BATHING

Most people take a quick shower in the morning when they get up. Hot water is normally available through a gas heater, which needs to be lit every time it is needed. **Make sure**



**ask your family how to start the**

**heater.** Remember that, since gas is expensive, you should turn off the heater as soon as you are finished, if no one else will be using hot water. Also remember to be considerate: **do not spend too much time in the bathroom and clean up when you are finished.**

## 8. YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people in Chile are basically the same as young people in other parts of the world. They have many of the same interests, problems, fears, and anxieties that you do. They do, however, have unique customs and traditions.

Many Chilean schools offer few social and sports activities, therefore young people usually meet in recreational centers or in friends' homes for their social events. They often have parties on weekends in which they talk and dance until late at night.



Of course, interest in the opposite sex is an international phenomenon! Young people get to know each other in school and by going out in large groups. A boy and girl who are dating are referred to as **pololos**. This word comes from the name of a bug that buzzes around people incessantly.

One thing that girls will especially notice is that boys are more expressive in their admiration than in other countries. It is very common for a girl to hear comments from boys on the street and in school. This should not be taken as an offense, but as a compliment, and nothing else.

## 9. MANNERS

### a. PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is understood in rather relaxed terms in Chile; being late is not considered such a bad thing. However, there are several important exceptions to this rule. For example, it is very important to get to school on time. If you arrive late to school it is quite likely that the doorman will not let you in. Punctuality should also be observed when arriving at official events. But, if you invite a group of friends to your house for a party at 8:00 p.m., they will probably arrive at about 8:30 p.m. or 9:00 p.m., or maybe even later. Don't worry. This is the Chilean way.



Greetings are considered very important in Chile. When arriving at a social gathering it is customary to greet every person individually. If you are relaxing at home, you should get up and greet any visitors before sitting back down.

When a boy is introduced to another boy, they normally shake hands. When a boy is introduced to a girl, or vice versa, these two people normally kiss each other on the cheek. This is the same when girls are introduced. It is very common for children to kiss their parents on the cheek in the morning and before going to bed. Be sure to watch your host brothers and sisters and do what they do. If they kiss their parents before bed and in the morning, you should do the same.

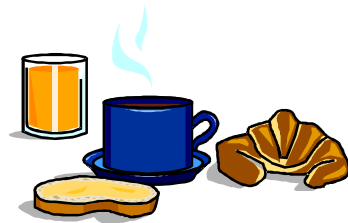
### c. PERSONAL SPACE

Every society has its own definition of personal space. North Americans generally keep a relatively large space from others. Chileans tend to keep much less personal space. It is aggravating, but unfortunately there is nothing you can do to widen that space. You will notice that while most Chileans respect lines, others will cut. They do so mainly because they can get away with it.

## 10. MEALS

### a. BREAKFAST

The first meal of the day is ***desayuno*** or breakfast, and is generally served around 7:00 am. It is rather light fare: bread and jam with milk for the children, and ***café con leche*** or tea for the adults. In some families, cereals might also be included.



### b. LUNCH

Lunch, or ***almuerzo***, is the big meal of the day, and is generally eaten between 1:00 and 2:00 pm., traditionally; two courses are served at lunch. The first is a soup or salad, and the second is usually a more substantial;

meat dish with vegetables, rice, or potatoes. In small towns, and in some areas of big cities, businesses close between 1:00 and 3:00 pm. so people can go home and have lunch with their families. Today, most businesses in larger cities stay open all day.

### c. ONCES

The third meal of the day, **onces**, it is around 5.00 pm., not 11:00 as the name implies. It is afternoon tea with bread and jam, sandwiches, or pastries. It is very common for children and adults alike to invite people over to share **onces**.

### d. DINNER

Dinner is usually referred to as **la comida**, and not **cena**, as in other Spanish speaking countries. It is usually served around 8:00 or 9:00. Dinner is usually one main dish that is interchangeable with what was served at lunch. Many foreigners find the meal too heavy to eat at such a late hour.

You will soon learn that Chilean people enjoy a leisurely period of “table talk” after each meal.

### e. SNACKS FROM THE FRIDGE



Make sure that you understand your host family’s rules regarding eating between meals. Some families accept it, while others may feel that you are being selfish if you eat something that was planned to be shared by the whole family, or was intended to be used at a later meal.

## 11. HOUSING IN CHILE

Neighborhoods differ throughout Chile. You will find modern housing, colonial style neighborhoods, adobe homes, low-income apartment complexes, and luxury condominiums. You will probably notice that all private properties with front yards are fenced or walled in for security reasons. The average middle-class home is rather small, and probably has only one bathroom. In the Chilean home the concept of privacy is understood rather loosely. You will discover that very little can be kept secret. Bedrooms are often shared, so you can expect to share a room with your host brother or sister.

Central heating is not a feature of the Chilean home. Instead, portable electric or kerosene heaters are used to keep the house warm in the wintertime. In the far south, however, central heating is more common. In Punta Arenas, almost all of the homes are centrally heated.

## 12. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Overall, Chile has a good educational system. An educational reform has recently been initiated in order to improve the quality of education, particularly in the public schools. There are three types of schools: **público** (government funded and administered by the municipalities), **particular subvencionado** (government funded, but privately administered), and **particular** (privately funded and administered). **Escuelas** (Primary Schools) provide education for the first eight grades and **Colegios or Liceos** (High Schools) the next four. Students remain together in the same homeroom and become very close as they study as one group for the entire eight, or even twelve years.



The Chilean school year begins within the first week of March and lasts until the first or second week of December. There are two vacation periods during the school year: a two-week "winter vacation" in June or July, and a one-week vacation in September to mark the coming of spring and Chile's

National Holiday. The school year is divided into three trimesters or two semesters, depending on the school you are attending. Students receive report cards at the end of each trimester or semester. Your final grade will be the average of the trimester or semester grade. Should a Chilean student fail three subjects, he or she is required to repeat the whole year.

All Chilean students, in private and public schools alike, are required to wear a uniform. Most public schools wear an official uniform, a complete description of which appears in the next section of this booklet.

The grading system in Chile is on a 1 – 7 scale. Seven represents the best grade possible, and one, the worst grade possible. A grade of four is the minimum passing grade in Chile.



**a. YOUR SCHOOL**

School is an essential part of the AFS experience. School will give you an opportunity to broaden your knowledge of our country, to participate as a serious and interested member of a classroom, and to get to know a wide circle of young people from different family backgrounds, many of whom may become your good friends. Your active and enthusiastic participation in your Chilean school is important, as it will further the reputation of AFS as a serious educational program, and increase the support AFS receives from teachers and school officials throughout Chile. Chilean school officials will have received a copy of your previous school transcripts, and will expect you to perform just as well in Chilean school. You will be expected to attend school everyday, and to take all tests and examinations. Your school has been instructed to give you a transcript of grades at the end of the year, provided you comply with all their requirements. The Chilean educational system may be somewhat different

from yours. In Chile, you will be studying between 10 and 13 subjects on a weekly basis. You will study all of these subjects with one group of students.

AFS Chile has made arrangements with host schools to place you in the grade that corresponds approximately with the level of studies you have attained in your own country, and you will be required to take the same classes as the rest of your Chilean classmates. There will be no exceptions to this rule. If there are subjects you have never studied before, like Physics, Chemistry, or foreign languages, you can ask the teacher to help you at the beginning by giving you special assignments to catch up with the rest of your Chilean classmates. But you should be aware that you will not be excused from these subjects.

### **b. SCHOOL UNIFORM**

All Chilean schools require their students to wear a uniform. This will apply to AFS students here on Year and Semester



**Programs. You will be responsible for your uniform.** Try to bring with you the items you can buy in your own country or bring the necessary amount of money to buy them here.

The uniform most commonly required by schools consists of the following items (prices are approximate as the exchange rate varies daily):

#### **Boys:**

- Navy blue jacket - US\$55
- Gray trousers (no corduroy) - US\$30
- White or light blue shirt (depending on your school) - US\$20
- Black leather shoes - US\$65
- Navy blue or gray socks - US\$5
- Sports uniform – US\$60

**Girls:**

- Navy blue, round neck, knee long jumper - US\$30
- Instead of the jumper, many schools now permit girls to wear navy blue (non corduroy) pants - US\$30
- White blouse, rounded collar (no nylon) - US\$20
- Knee high, navy blue socks - US\$5
- Black shoes (no high heeled or platform) - US\$65
- Sports uniform – US\$60

Some schools require a tie and a school emblem. This has to be bought at school.

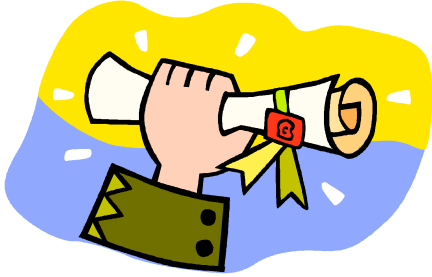
The prices indicated above are approximate; you may find the different items at higher or lower prices. When you budget your money for the school uniform, keep in mind that you will need 2/3 blouses/shirts and several pairs of socks. You also have to consider a navy blue sweater and navy blue parka or jacket (both boys and girls) for the wintertime.

Although most items will be difficult to find in your country, we strongly suggest you to bring the shoes (especially if you wear a big size), pants, socks, sweater, parka, and probably shirts.

**It is important to note that most private schools require a different uniform from that which was described above.** If this is your case, it will be indicated in the "School Information" form, which will be sent with your host family papers. We also recommend you to contact your host family for more specific information regarding your school uniform. Also, it will be necessary to consider the climate of the area where you have been placed. You can find this information in the climate section of this booklet.

**c. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Some schools help the students organize a trip to other parts of the country or to neighboring countries, for which they usually begin fundraising in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If your school sponsors such trip, and you want to participate, you will have to pay for the total fee, which varies depending on the place your class goes.



#### d. GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

Those students placed in the last year of high school will most likely have the chance to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

They usually include a formal dinner and dance for which students raise money through different activities. The fee to participate is usually high. AFS students who want to attend will have to pay for their fee, which varies from place to place, but is approximately US\$150.

### 13. HOLIDAYS IN CHILE

Chileans are a religious and patriotic people. Of the 14 official holidays celebrated each year, half are religious. Religious holidays are observed privately and quietly, while secular holidays are celebrated with fanfare. The most important holidays are:

#### a. AÑO NUEVO

New Year's Eve is a festive occasion. It takes place in the middle of the summer, and is celebrated with **asados** (barbecues) and family gatherings. Fireworks traditionally light up the skies throughout the country at the stroke of midnight. Everyone embraces to wish each other a happy New Year. After celebrating with the family, many people go to parties and visit friends until the wee hours of the morning.





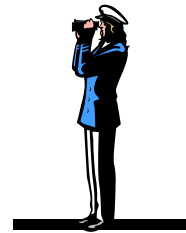


### b. SEMANA SANTA

Many Chileans attend church during Easter Holiday (Semana Santa), which culminates with Easter Sunday. Good Friday is an official holiday and offices are closed. Easter Sunday is the holiest day for Catholics and many Chileans spend the day in their homes with their families. Chileans of German descent traditionally celebrate the day with Easter egg hunts. Recently this custom has spread to the rest of the country.

### c. DÍA DE LAS GLORIAS NAVALES

May 21<sup>st</sup> is Navy Day (Glorias Navales), and is the second most important patriotic holiday. This day honors the heroism and courage of Arturo Prat, the Chilean Navy's greatest hero. The president makes the annual "State of the Nation Address" on this day, as congress opens for a new session. The **Mensaje Presidencial** recounts the achievements of the past year, and lays out the administration's plans for the future of the country.



### d. FIESTAS PATRIAS

The **Fiestas Patrias** are two days of celebration. September 18<sup>th</sup> is the National Day and September 19<sup>th</sup> is the Army Day (Glorias del Ejército). Many Chileans prepare **asados** during the day, and visit the **fondas** at night. **Fondas** are fairs set up all over the country with tents serving traditional food and drinks. Many of the larger tents feature live music and dancing. The national dance of Chile is la **Cueca** and is always danced on these days. If you go to a **fonda**, you can be sure that you will be invited to dance **cueca**. Don't be shy; it is a fun and easy way of showing how much



you enjoy the country. Also popular during this time of the year are the Chilean style *rodeos*. Army day is celebrated with a large military parade.

These holidays make September a very festive month. Chileans burst with national pride, and the flag is flown throughout the country (the only month when this is allowed). You will see kites sold on every street corner and flown in every park.

### e. NAVIDAD



Christmas is a much more relaxed holiday in Chile than in other parts of the world. There is Christmas spirit, but one is not overwhelmed with Christmas decoration, except in shopping malls. Santa Claus makes his appearance, terribly overdressed for the summer heat in his heavy red suit. Chileans adorn their homes with nativity scenes and Christmas trees, both real and artificial, a tradition brought to Chile by Germans. Christmas is family oriented with an emphasis on children. Families attend midnight Mass and open presents on Christmas Eve. On Christmas day families gather for an **asado** or spend the day at the beach. It is traditional to serve **pan de pascua** (fruitcake) and **cola de mono** (liquor made with cinnamon, coffee and milk).

## 14. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA



Chile communicates with countries all over the world through e-mail, and telephone. The Chilean postal system provides efficient internal and international mail service. Letters sent from Chile reach their destinations in the US, Europe, or Asia in seven to ten days.

There are more than 300 radio stations throughout the country. The music played on these stations ranges from classical, to Chilean folk music, to easy listening, to the latest rock and pop from all over the world. As many as ten

newspapers are published in Santiago, along with many weekly and monthly magazines. International magazines and newspapers are available in large cities. Seven national TV networks, and some local stations, provide daily entertainment in the larger cities. Programs are a mixture of live Chilean shows and internationally known series, plus the inevitable “soaps” (from Chile and other countries).

International Cable Service and Satellite TV are available and are common in many homes.

### **e. TELEPHONE**

Telephone service can be very expensive in Chile. There is a charge for each call besides the normal monthly rate in most cities. The charge will depend on the time of the day. Make sure that you fully understand your family’s rules regarding the use of the telephone. You don’t want them to be angry with you at the end of the month when they get the bill. If you want to call your family abroad, be sure to inform your host family and let them know how you are going to pay for the call.



### **MOBILE OR CELL PHONES**

The use of cellular phones among young people is more and more common every day in Chile, and the purchase and usage is comparatively inexpensive. However, it will be very important for you to take into consideration your host family’s feelings in this aspect. Many Chilean families do not have the means to purchase cell phones for their children, and still others do not consider it appropriate for young people to own and use their own phones. Please be respectful.

In Chile there are 5 cell phone companies, **Movistar, Entel, Claro, VTR and Virgin Mobile**. It's very easy to find a *sim card* of any company in case you want to bring the cell phone that you use in your country but your cell phone might not work in Chile because of the different technology we might have. It's quite cheap to buy a pre paid cell phone.

**Remember that it is unacceptable to use a cell phone while you are in class.**

## 15. AFS CHILE

AFS started its program in Chile in 1958, when eight Chilean young people went to the US for one year. In 1961, the first group of North American students came to Chile for the summer. Since then, more than 5,000 Chileans have lived their AFS experience in USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Thailand, Canada, Brazil, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and other countries. At the same time, AFS Chile has hosted more than 3,000 students from all over the world for the year, semester or short program.

A National Office, supervised by the Board of Directors of the **Fundación AFS Chile**, is responsible for running the AFS program in Chile. This National Office, located in Santiago, monitors each AFS student's experience, while also training and supporting the volunteer network in Chile. There are 28 Local AFS Chapters in Chile. Each Chapter is headed by a Chapter President, who is responsible for the running of the AFS program in that area. Chilean volunteers represent a wide variety of people: youngsters, adults, parents, grandparents, teacher, medical doctors, managers, etc. They all have one thing in common – **they believe in AFS**. In Chile, young returnees form the largest group among the volunteers, although they are concentrated in the larger cities as most of them are also attending universities. In all the Local

Chapters, you will find that both young and older people are actively involved.

The staff of the National Office, as well as the volunteers from the Local Chapters, will provide you with orientation and guidance, when needed, during your stay in Chile. A contact person will be assigned to you at the local level, so you will have someone you can approach easily to talk to about your concerns, worries, and feelings. You should turn to your local contact person if you have any questions or doubts and are not yet confident enough to share them with your host family. Of course, you should always feel free to contact the National Office with your questions, concerns or problems.

### **a. ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES**

Immediately after arrival in Chile, you will receive a national survival orientation that will last 1-2 days. Post arrival orientation will be held for all Year and Semester Program students 4-6 weeks after arrival in your host community.

The survival orientation is held in a Conference Center, just outside the city of Santiago. **You must bring your own towels and toiletries.**

There will be staff members and volunteers present depending on the number of students. The survival orientation focuses on basic skills and general information about the country. The information covered includes:

- Information on AFS Chile and volunteer structure.
- Brief general information on host families, schools, and communities.
- Basic cultural aspects of Chilean families.
- Information on money, documents needed for student visa, I.D. cards, travel to host communities, etc.

The complete Orientation Program for Year and Semester students includes 3 sessions during your stay, which might be held locally or regionally. Attendance to these events is compulsory.

## **b. TRAVEL TO HOST COMMUNITIES**



Upon arrival students will travel to their host families by different means of transportation depending on the area where they are hosted. Students traveling to the very north and far south travel by plane, others go by bus or train. We normally try to organize travel in groups. Those going by plane usually travel alone as flights are only 2/3 hours. AFS volunteers and host families meet them at the local airport. Groups going by train or bus are always chaperoned. If a student is the only one going to a community, he/she is also chaperoned. Students placed in the Santiago area, and other close communities, are picked up by their host families at the orientation site.

It is important to note that regardless of the weight limitation for international flights, the domestic limit for airlines, buses, and trains is **20 kilos**. Students are responsible for the payment of any overweight luggage.

## **c. STUDENT SUPPORT**

Normally, there are organized chapters in each hosting community, but due to development of new hosting areas, there is a possibility of being in a community without an organized chapter. However, you are always assigned a contact person. Neighboring chapters and the National Office will always give support.



#### **d. SPENDING MONEY**

AFS Chile recommends that Year Program students allocate between US\$1.000 and US\$1.500. The Semester Year Program students should bring between US\$500 and US\$750. The Intensive Program Students should bring between US\$300. This should be an appropriate amount of money to meet your needs during your stay.

There is a great variety of Banks and financial institutions in Santiago, the capital, and it is possible to exchange different types of currency. However, this is not so in the rest of the country. We therefore recommend that you bring US dollars.

ATMs are widely available in Chile, from which you can access international accounts, providing another, more secure, option. If you decide to bring travelers' checks, be aware that you may be charged high rates of commission at banks. Visa, MasterCard, and Diner's Club, are the most widely accepted credit cards. Cash advances on your credit card are available at all ATMs. Whatever arrangement you choose, we do not recommend you bring more than US\$300 in cash.

If you do not have a credit or ATM card, the best way for your parents to send you money during the year is through the Western Union. There are offices for the corresponding Chilean company in cities throughout the country.

If the alternatives that have been described above do not work out for one reason or another, you should contact the National Office for other alternatives.

Plan on budgeting your money throughout your stay, and use your resources with an awareness of the spending habits of your host family.

## 16. TRAVEL DURING THE YEAR

Most of the students who arrive in our country would like to visit as many places as possible while they are here. You should remember, however, that the purpose of this program is to offer a deep knowledge of our culture by living with a family. Students must keep in mind the tremendous responsibility undertaken by AFS and by the host families. All travel during your time with us will be regulated by the following terms.

### **a. VISITS FROM RELATIVES AND FRIENDS DURING THE AFS PROGRAM**

AFS Chile recommends to not receive visits from relatives and friends during the development of the exchange program, then, in most cases, have a disruptive impact on the student and hosts families, distracting them from obligations and commitments to the host family and school and imposing new responsibilities on the host family and local support structure.

These visits can be made only after the second part of student's experience and in consultation with AFS local volunteers, who will review the adaptation process of the student to the experience and will regulate the time and duration of the visit, which should not exceed five days and it must not interfere with the activities of AFS, family and host school.

If natural parents want to travel with their child, they should present the itinerary to AFS Chile and home country before the arrival to Chile. They must sign a document called "Travel Waiver" which certifies that they assume full responsibility for their child while they are traveling.

This trips should not disrupt school's student participation, any absences from the school must to be justified and required approval from host school.

It is important to keep in mind that AFS Chile will strongly discourage to remain in our country after the program ends or to extend the period of his/her program.



### **b. TRIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE HOST FAMILY AND HOSSCHOOL.**

Trips with host family members in which the family arranges the destination, means of transportation, and lodging will always be authorized. However, the AFS Local Representative must be informed before making the trip. Should there be any problem in locating the Local Representative; the National Office should be notified. If the family trip includes leaving Chile, the National Office will need to be contacted well in advance in order to obtain the necessary authorization form from the student's natural parents and have it legalized as requested by immigration. These trips should not imply a long absence from school. Class trips will also be considered in this category.



### **c. TRIPS TO AFS ORIENTATIONS AND/OR AFS ACTIVITIES**

These trips and activities are compulsory. The AFS Local Representative may waive a student's participation in case other priorities should arise. No student will be waived from participation in the first orientation meeting. The local chapter or National Office will cover the cost of these trips.

### **d. SIGHTSEEING TRIPS WITH AFS.**

AFS Chile will organize two sightseeing tours each year. One of these tours will go to the north of Chile, and the other will go to the south of the country. These tours will be available to Year and Semester students depending on the dates of their stays. The cost will be of approximately US\$1000, depending on the exchange rate as it needs to be paid in Chilean pesos, the cost is to be covered by the student. The dates and itinerary of the tours will be announced beforehand.

Finally, AFS Punta Arenas Local Chapter organize a Patagonia Tour in November. This tour is available to Year and Semester students depending

on the dates of their stays. The cost will be of approximately US\$1200, depending on the exchange rate as it needs to be paid in Chilean pesos, the cost is to be covered by the student. The dates and itinerary of the tours will be announced beforehand.

#### **e. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL**

Those trips gives to students the opportunity to visit another host community, but it will be supervised by local volunteers from their host local chapter. Students must to respect the rules and take time to share with family members in this place. Planning this trip should not disrupt school student participation.

- Independent travel will not be accepted until after the middle of the experience of the student in our country.
- Students cannot stay **alone** in a residential, hostel or hotel.
- If there is any absence from school by an independent trip, this must be authorized and approved by the educational establishment. This absence from classes shall not be more than a day.
- If an exchange students develop some kind of independent travel shall not leave their host community without completing the forms that have been prepared for these trips and that are shared with students by local volunteers. (These documents must be approved by the National Office of AFS CHILE).
- Trips without the consent or without the approval of AFS are absolutely prohibited by AFS CHILE, exposing the participant to sanctions that may involve their early return to their home countries.

## **17. THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

### **a. DRINKING**

By signing up for the AFS program, participants agree to abide by the laws of the hosting country and community, including the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The Chilean Alcohol Policy states that it is against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to consume or purchase alcohol.

Some Chilean families might allow their children to have a drink with meals or during special social celebrations; AFS-CHILE expects participants to respect and follow the Chilean law, otherwise, they risk being sent home.

The students who are already 18 years old or turn 18 while on program, will be asked to sign an Alcohol Consumption Agreement.

## **b. SMOKING**

Most families do not allow their children to smoke; therefore you will have to consider your host family's feeling about smoking before you smoke in their home. **Smoking at schools is totally forbidden.** There is an increasing anti-smoking attitude in the country and a recent law does not allow the sale of smoking material to people younger than 18 and it doesn't allow smoking in public places like restaurants, airports, malls, shopping centers, etc.

## **c. CORRUPTION AND DRUG TRAFFICKING**

Latin America tends to invoke images of rampant corruption and drug trafficking. While it would be incorrect to say that corruption is nonexistent in Chile, stiff penalties have kept the number of incidents relatively low. Offering or accepting bribes is considered a serious offense and is not tolerated. **Under no circumstances should you ever offer a bribe to a police officer.**

Chile, furthermore, is not a major player in the drug trade. It is true that drug use is a problem in some areas, but the business of drug trafficking has

sidestepped Chile. Drugs are not grown nor manufactured in Chile, and although some money laundering has occurred, the government is aware of such activities and the police work vigorously to thwart such activities. Anyone found having links with drug traffickers is punished accordingly.

#### **d. MEDICAL EXPENSES**

AFS will pay for any medical expenses due to accident or illness suffered while you are in Chile that are not covered by any other insurance policy. AFS will not pay for dental care, eyeglasses, or for any condition that existed before you came to Chile.



#### **e. ELECTRICITY**



Electricity in Chile is 220 volts, 50 cycles, so you will either need to make sure that your equipment (hairdryer, shaver, and other electronics) is compatible, or make sure that you bring a transformer for them.

## **18. AFS GOLDEN RULES**



### **a. DRUGS**

Possession and/or use of non-prescription drugs are not allowed by AFS. Possession and use of drugs are illegal in Chile and if an AFS student becomes involved with drugs in any way he/she will be punished as determined by Chilean law. Corresponding AFS measures will be taken with the immediate return of the student to the home country.



#### **b. DRIVING**



All AFS students, regardless of age, are forbidden to drive cars, motorcycles, or any other motor vehicles. This rule also applies to driving in private areas such as driveways or parking lots: Failure to comply with this rule subjects the student to immediate return home.

#### **c. HITCHHIKING**

Students are not permitted to hitchhike. The infringement of this rule will cause the student to be sent home.



## **19. CONCLUSION**

Here are some important words of advice that will help you get the most out of your time in Chile.

**First**, it is very important that you come to Chile with an open mind and a willingness to learn about our country and our culture.

**Second**, you should always remember that you have come to Chile to learn, not to teach. Be sure to listen and observe carefully all that is going on around you while you are here. Make every effort not to judge Chilean culture too quickly. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS about what you see and hear!

**Third**, remember that the AFS experience is not an easy one. You will have to work very hard. As in all experiences, there will be good and bad times during your AFS stay in Chile.

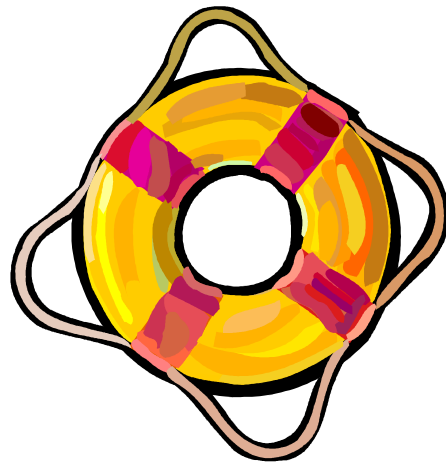
**Fourth**, it will be very important for you to communicate how you feel and what you think to your host family and your new friends. By communicating you will reach deeper levels of understanding and affection with them, and you will avoid many possible misunderstandings.

And **fifth**, don't forget to maintain a sense of humor. You will be in a new culture and you are going to make mistakes. Chilean people will laugh affectionately at your mistakes. If you are also able to laugh at yourself now and then, you will be much better off.

Remember that your attitude will be the key to your AFS experience. We sincerely hope that you come with a desire to learn everything you can about Chile. Try to be open and enthusiastic about trying new things and communicating with your Chilean family and friends.



# SAFETY TIPS



1.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A primary objective of any experimental learning program such as those offered by AFS is to help the participant learn through observation, question, dialogue, discussion, and experience. AFS Chile Staff and Volunteers understand that the opportunity to learn is great, but it is not necessarily easy. Participants will encounter complex situations along the way and there is potential for confusion, fear, and misunderstanding. If students are left to their own devices, the consequences could be very distressing. For these reasons, with the help of host families, AFS local contacts, and school personnel, AFS Chile has devised a Program Support System for all participants that include a wide range of activities and services. The purpose is to provide a Safety Net, a consistently supportive environment in which participants can ask questions, obtain advice, and receive assistance.

AFS Chile cannot supply all the answers, but through our support systems, we can help guide participants towards asking the right questions.

It is not possible to anticipate all possible situations pertaining to individual safety concerns. Many of these issues are specific to individual countries or areas. In general AFS Chile recommends talking with the host family, local chapter members, and staff from the host school about the information in this guidebook and any personal concerns soon after arrival in the host community. The information about Chile in movies and media publications is not always accurate, and the student should ask his/her host family about any concerns, worries, or doubts regarding specific situations.

AFS Chile would like to invite students to take advantage of this Support Program and Safety Net by reading the following topics of interest and suggestions.



## 2. IN AND AROUND THE HOME

### a. HEATING

The majority of Chileans use gas for cooking, heating water, and for warming their homes. The water heater is called **Calefont**. You should be very careful when using all gas appliances. Ask your family about necessary precautions.

The **Calefont** is generally located in the kitchen or bathroom. It must be turned on and the pilot lit every time you want to use hot water. It should not be left on when not in use. When you turn on the hot water do not be surprised by the loud, whooshing noise it makes as it ignites to heat the water.

The **estufa** is a space heater that is a must for every room in the house. Some new houses and apartments may have central heating, but in general it tends to be too expensive for the average Chilean home. There are three types of **estufas**: gas, electric, and kerosene (**parafina**).

### b. HOME SECURITY CHECKLIST

These are some helpful questions you should ask your family:

1. Do you always lock your doors and windows?
2. Am I going to have a house key? If not, what if I get locked out?
3. Do you have a first aid kit? Where is it?
4. Do you have a fire extinguisher? Where do you keep it?
5. What should I do in case of emergency? Whom should I call?
6. Where do you keep emergency phone numbers?
7. How should I answer the phone? What information should not be given out to strangers?

8. What should I do if I am alone and a stranger is at the door? What should I tell him/her?
9. Are there any appliances that could cause a problem that I should be aware of?



### c. EARTHQUAKES

Tremors in Chile are very common, and if you do not come from an area prone to earthquakes, it can be a frightening adjustment. Chileans swear that a major earthquake is destined to hit somewhere in the country every five years, but there is no scientific proof to support this claim. If you look closely, you will notice that Chileans take care in decorating their homes so that fragile items are secured, and will not easily fall in a tremor.

The best advice in the case of an earthquake is to brace yourself in a doorframe. If you are in the city do not run outside, as there is danger of falling electrical lines. All buildings in urban areas are built according to strict earthquake resistant codes. In rural areas, where houses may be less resilient and power lines far away, it is best to be outside. Chances are you will not experience a major earthquake, but you will notice minor tremors during your stay.

### d. WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF AN EARTHQUAKE

#### **During the earthquake:**

**Stay calm.** Move away from any buildings, electrical lines, and possible falling objects.

**If you are indoors:**

1. Stay in the building.
2. Crawl under a table or desk, kneel down, and cover your head with your arms.
3. Move away from windows.
4. Move away from any possible falling objects.

**After the earthquake:**

1. Do not leave the building unless you are told to do so.
2. Notify the authorities in case of fires gas, or water leaks.
3. If someone is hurt, look for help.
4. Do not touch loose or broken electrical wires.
5. Do not walk barefoot.
6. Do not use lighters, candles, or matches as there may be gas leaks.
7. Do not use any electrical appliances.
8. Be sure all gas lines are closed completely.
9. Expect more quakes.

**If you are asked to evacuate the building:**

1. Stay calm. If you become hysterical you will only contribute to widespread panic.
2. Move toward the previously established security area following the instructions of those in charge.
3. Assist anyone who may fall.
4. Beware of crevices that may appear on the ground.
5. Stay with your group. Make sure everyone else is with the group as well.
6. Do not go back into the building until you are told to do so.

### **3. OUTSIDE THE HOME**

Students should read any information available from police and school organizations regarding personal safety in their specific communities. They should then share it with their host family, and ask for any clarification. If such information is not available, AFS Chile encourages you to let your host parents know whenever you are concerned or frightened. Ask them what they recommend to help you feel more secure. Keep your host parents informed about where you are going, and leave a telephone number for where you will be. Your host family knows more about the local community than you do and is best prepared to give you advice about places that are better to avoid and how to get around. Take their advice seriously and follow their recommendations.

### **4. CITY AREAS TO AVOID**

Chile is a relatively safe country, but, like in any country, you should be cautious. There may be some places in your area where you should avoid going. You should always dress in an appropriate manner and be careful with your belongings (cameras, bags, books, etc.). A good tip is to watch what the other members of your family do, how they dress, what kinds of jewelry they use and when, and what things they carry with them.

### **5. STAYING OUT LATE AT NIGHT**

In general, you should avoid being out alone late at night. If you go out to a party or visit a friend, somebody will usually drive you back home or your family will make arrangements for you to be picked up. When in crowded areas and on buses take care of your belongings because pick pocketing and purse snatchings are common.



US dollars are not widely accepted, so you will have to change money upon arrival. It is customary for traveler's checks to trade at a slightly lower rate than cash. You will need to go to a ***casa de cambio*** (money exchange) as banks may or may not provide this service. If provided, the bank will always offer a lower exchange rate than a ***casa de cambio***. For a fee, the ***casa de cambio*** will also issue or cash a check in US dollars. Remember to be careful upon leaving ***casas de cambio*** and banks as experienced pickpockets prey upon Chileans and foreigners alike.

## 8. UNCOMFORTABLE SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Knowing something about the culture is usually the best preparation for knowing how to handle uncomfortable social situations. It is a good idea for your host parents to meet and get to know the friends with whom you spend your free time. If you are unsure about the safety of attending a party, concert, or other activity, we recommend you find out about the conditions and who will be attending from your host siblings, parents, friends, or teachers. Some host parents may forbid you from attending certain kinds of parties. You should respect your parents' wishes even if people you know will be attending.

## 9. ILLEGAL DRUGS

Although drugs, mostly marihuana, sometimes circulate among Chilean high school students, violence in relation to this problem is very rare and does not constitute a major danger. However, any student caught consuming, or in possession of, drugs will be processed by Chilean law.

Participants are not allowed any contact with illegal drugs or people who use them. They must avoid being present in any situation in which drugs may be present. **Explicit violation of this rule is cause for dismissal from the program and return to the home country.**

## 10. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The legal drinking age, as well as the legal age to purchase alcohol in Chile, is 18 years old. Minors are not allowed to drink alcohol nor getting into public places that sell mainly alcohol like pubs and discos, etc. However, some Chilean families might allow their children to have a drink with meals or during special social celebrations. The law prohibits drinking on the streets and in parks regardless of age. AFS students must abide the law, otherwise they could become involved in legal problems and also will be putting their AFS program at risk.

## 11. THE LAW

AFS students are under the laws of their hosting country. Neither AFS nor the government of the student's home country has the power to protect a student from prosecution due to drug use, theft, or other legal offenses.

## 12. DRIVING AND HITCHHIKING

As an AFS student you are not allowed to drive any kind of motorized vehicle (car, motorcycle, moped, etc.). The legal driving age in Chile is 18, and no AFS student should get into any vehicle with a driver who is younger, who does not have a license, or who has consumed alcohol or drugs. If you are in this situation, contact your host family or local volunteer to find out how to get home. Remember that hitchhiking is forbidden at all times.

## 13. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practices between young people. The advice of people you have come to know and trust here in Chile will be very valuable to clarify attitudes and behavior that may confuse you. Knowing and understanding the people with whom you socialize is very important, and will be acquired through an increasing

knowledge of the culture. Remember that your own values and beliefs regarding your behavior are always important, and should not be compromised.

Sexual harassment is likely to happen in any country. It is common in Chile for males to whistle at girls. This does not need to be considered an insult or sexual harassment. You should ignore them and walk away.

In some situations you may be unsure whether you are being sexually harassed or if a person's behavior would be considered normal or just friendly. Your first source is your own instinct. You can also get advice from host siblings and parents, friends, teachers, and AFS volunteers on what is considered appropriate behavior

**Remember to always use common sense.**

- Never get into a stranger's car.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not go into isolated areas with people you don't know well.
- If you think that someone is following you, try to go into a well lighted, public place (shop, restaurant) and ask for help.
- Carry telephone numbers for your host family and local volunteers at all times.

In the event of an actual assault, you should first notify your host family. Your host parents can then take over to notify the police and the AFS local chapter and/or National Office and arrange for a medical check-up.



## 14. EMERGENCIES

In Chile you will see armed military personnel guarding military buildings and offices. The Police, known as ***Carabineros de Chile***, are the force in charge of controlling traffic, patrolling the streets, and watching over the general public's security.

If you are stopped for any reason by the police or other civil authorities, you should show respect and cooperate. The authorities have the right to stop anyone at anytime and ask them for identification (I.D card or passport). If you do not understand what is being said by the official, you should identify yourself as an exchange student and tell them you do not understand.

It is mandatory for all foreigners holding student visas to obtain a Chilean I.D. card, and to carry it at all times. This is important, not only in the event of being questioned by the authorities, but also in the unfortunate event that you should be involved in an accident or if you become the victim of a crime and are not able to communicate effectively.

In the case of an emergency, you should try to contact your host family, the local contact person, or the AFS Chile National Office.

There are also no-charge emergency numbers, which can be dialed from any public or private phone.

Emergency Police: ***Carabineros de Chile***, dial 133

Emergency Fire Department: ***Bomberos***, dial 132

Emergency Ambulance Service: ***Ambulancia***, dial 131

### a. THE POLICE

In any emergency the best advice is to call the police first at 133. They will respond quickly, and will direct your call to any other agency needed (fire department or ambulance



service). The other branch of the Chilean police force is the **Policia de Investigaciones** (Investigation Unit). These are plain clothed police detectives.

### b. FIRE DEPARTMENT



All firemen are volunteers in Chile, and you will often see them collecting contributions in the street. **Bomberos** are highly respected and undergo rigorous training. There is a strict hierarchical order within each company. Fire departments are funded by the State, members' contributions, public donations, and revenue from lotteries that by law must donate a portion to charities.

### c. NATIONAL EMERGENCY

In the case of a national emergency, the student should follow the advice of national or local authorities. The AFS Chile National Office will contact students immediately in order to provide any necessary assistance. A list of all students being hosted is submitted to the respective Embassies by the National Office at the beginning of the program.

Chile is a relatively quiet country that is far from international centers of tension. You should be aware, however, that the risk of potential terrorist actions exists all over the world.

15.

## CONCLUSION

The best advice AFS Chile can give regarding issues of personal safety is as follows:

- Get to know the host culture well through questions, dialogue, and discussion with your host family, peers, and local volunteers. It is important to observe their behavior, and do what they do whenever possible.
- Take any concerns expressed by your host family, school, and local volunteer seriously, and follow their advice.
- The Participation Agreement that you signed prior to leaving home stated that AFS Chile would make recommendations and provide guidelines for personal welfare and security. This advice should be taken seriously, and you should comply with the guidelines.

We hope that this experience will be rewarding, both for you and for your family. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or doubts.

The AFS Chile office is open Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 6:00pm. In the case of an emergency while you are here, you should contact your Local Representative. If he/she cannot be located, AFS has a cellular telephone number for emergency situations that can be reached at any time after office hours.

**+56 9 9322 3786**

An AFS Chile staff will attend your call, and will give you instructions on how to proceed.

### **AFS CHILE**

**Address:** San Pascual 750, Las Condes, Santiago

**Phone number:** (2) 23797800

**Toll free number:** 800-368-380