



AYP (Academic Year Program)

Families:

Most of our families call us and ask us if we have students from a foreign country who would like to stay in Germany with them. The majority of the families has children who have spent a year abroad or whose children are currently abroad and who have a vacant room for an exchange student. **The host families do not get paid.** They take up students on a voluntary basis. The families are interested in foreign cultures and traditions. Many of them want to enable students from other countries to get to know the German culture and life style. The parents have sent their kids with DFSR abroad and were very satisfied. Now they want to enable other children to make the same experience. We know the majority of the families personally since we have met them doing the interview or at one of DFSR's preparation meetings for exchange students. Once we pick a family to host a student a coordinator will be send to the house. The coordinator looks at the house and garden, checks the room of the student, interview all family members, has a look at the neighbourhood, checks public transportation. Mostly our host families have children who still go to school but we will also accept single parents or retired people if they can provide a nice, clean and friendly home.

Towns and cities:

Families can be anywhere in Germany, in suburban areas and in cities. German cities are very safe and have excellent public transportation. We primarily look for good and suitable host families rather than placing students in desired cities. Students of course, can tell us where they would like to be placed (region) and we will try our best to find a school and host family there but we cannot guarantee it.

Schools:

We have different types of schools in Germany:

1. Hauptschule (9 years)
2. Realschule (10 years)
3. Gesamtschule (10 years)
4. Gymnasium (13 years)

Students who would like to study after school have to attend a Gymnasium (13 school years). Other students will go to the other schools. Depending on the age, German knowledge and the school grades we will place students in Gymnasium, Realschule or Gesamtschule. If possible, we place students at the same school as the host brother or sister. From grade 1-10 the school is basically the same at each school. Classes 11-13 are more difficult. Students will have to elect special courses (emphasize on languages or science).

We have 2 half school years in Germany (2 semesters). Depending on the "Bundesland" (German state more or less) school start after a 6 week summer vacation in July/August/September and runs until late January. The second semester starts the at end of January/Beginning of February and runs until summer, again depending on the "Bundesland". There are quiet a few weeks holiday in Germany. I will list them for you:

July/August: 6 week summer vacation
October: 1-2 weeks autumn vacation
December: 2-3 weeks winter vacation
February: 1 week skiing vacation
April: 2-3 week spring/easter vacation
May: a couple of days off for religious holidays

The amount of days and weeks off depends on the "Bundesland".

The students can start school either in January/February or July/August (summer or winter semester). The official beginning of a school year is after the summer holidays in July/August. Students can then stay for either one year until next summer, for three month until the Christmas holidays or half a school year until January. Students who come in January can stay half a year until summer, three months until the Easter break or 10 months until Christmas. If students come in January and want to stay for 10 month they have to keep in mind that there is the 6 week summer vacation in between and that the German students enter the next grade after the summer break.

Coordinators:

We have around 50 coordinators in entire Germany. They are freelancers for DFSR. Most of them have done an exchange year to USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand with DSFR. They are familiar with living away from home for a long time, they know about the application process, speak at least 2 languages fluently, have experience in adapting to a new environment, people, country etc. They get regular training in intercultural conflict management and will assist the families and students with their experience. We also have some parents of former exchange students who are familiar with the exchange program when their kids were abroad. Mostly the freelancers do interviews for our high school department. They meet with the parents and the student who is interested in doing an exchange year. They give advice, answer questions and do an English oral interview.

Insurance:

DFSR can provide a first class travel insurance at the rate of Euro € 60,00 per month per person. The insurance (called SITE) includes: health, accident, liability, luggage insurance as well as legal assistance and a medical helpline.

Money:

We recommend Euro 150-200 per month as pocket money for the students. This money is personal spending money for e.g. movie tickets, bus/train tickets, toiletries, snacks etc. The visa fee in Germany is around 40 Euros.

Some schools in Germany provide lunch possibilities for little money. Students get a warm meal for about Euro 2-3. Often students bring their lunch from home or get something to eat in a nearby store.