FAMILY LIFE

Turkmen families generally consist of parents, children, and grandparents. The average number of children is 2-3, and more in rural areas. In cities, both parents usually work and are financially responsible for the family, while in rural areas, families generally have a single income provided by the father. Usually the father is seen as the head of the family and decision-maker. Families usually eat meals together.

It is common for siblings to share clothing, shoes, and electronics, and they do not always ask for permission. Parents give teenagers spending money, since teenagers usually do not work. Teenagers often interact informally with family members and are responsible for focusing on their studies and managing their own free time. Personal space is not a common concept, especially within the family.

Some families assign duties to individual members of the family. Men usually do not do family chores, and, while members of the family have time to spend on personal interests, free time for women is limited since they are expected to be busy with housework. Cooking is mainly done by the females of the family. Punctuality is respected in Turkmenistan, but being a few minutes late is common in informal situations.

Parents usually limit their children’s use of the internet. Some parents are actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children’s extracurricular activities, and most parents are in contact with their children’s school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Generally teenagers are not very independent and rely on their parents in most aspects of life. They usually share their plans with their parents and take their parents’ opinion into account when making decisions.

It is uncommon to have pets, and they would usually not be allowed in the home.

FRIENDSHIP

Many teenagers have peer groups and friends and use social media to interact with each other. Teens from cities tend to be open to mixed gender socializing, while teenagers from rural areas are more segregated. Turkmen teenagers interact with their friends at school, in the neighborhood, or through common activities. While they may have many friends, they spend most of their time with one or two close friends. They may share or borrow from each other, but paying back borrowed money is expected.
Eye contact is important when socializing and talking to others, but in some traditional families, teenagers do not make direct eye-contact with adults as a sign of respect. It is common for Turkmen teenagers to show negative emotions to their peers, but not to display them to others. Older people are highly respected and children are taught to listen to and obey them.

**SCHOOL LIFE**

Students take 15 to 17 subjects at a time which do not meet every day and they study the same subjects as a group. Students are evaluated on homework, special assignments, and periodic exams. To maintain good grades, students must turn in daily homework, participate verbally in class, and perform well on exams. Most Turkmen students are required to wear a school uniform. Cheating is not allowed but is a common practice where students try to help each other. Fighting and bullying are also prohibited at schools, and can result in warnings and parent notification.

Parents have parent-teacher meetings to discuss their child's progress once every 2-3 months. If any misbehavior or absence occurs, schools contact the parents directly.

Turkmen students study with the same students in all lessons and do not change classrooms. Subjects are not offered at varied levels of difficulty and students are not able to choose which courses they take. Students are expected to show respect to their teachers and usually have a formal relationship with them. They must raise their hand to make or argue their points.

Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities are not commonly offered by schools. Students may have private music, sport or other activities through clubs or other organizations in the community for a fee.

**FOOD**

Most people in Turkmenistan are Muslim and follow a halal diet. Families typically eat traditional foods and do not try new dishes. Vegetarianism and other special diets are very uncommon.

**RELIGION**

The population is predominantly Muslim and the practice of religion is an individual or family event, and is solely for worship rather than for a sense of community.

**PERSONAL CARE**

Teenagers may shower once or more a day, especially in the summer. Teenagers often change their clothes daily and it is acceptable to wear the same clothes two or more days before washing. Students are not used to washing their own clothes and are unfamiliar with washers and dryers. Bathrooms are shared by all family members, and teenagers are expected to keep the bathrooms clean after use. Each family member has their own towel that is usually replaced every other day.