

# **Travel Guide for Unaccompanied Students**

## **The Center for Talented Youth–Summer Programs**

### **Booking Travel**

- **What information will I need to know before booking travel?**

Before booking travel, make certain you know the following information:

- the site your child is attending
- the session being attended
- the arrival and departure dates for the session
- the designated airport(s) or train station for the site being attended
- the shuttle pick-up times for your designated airport(s) or train station
- the airline or rail carrier’s policies regarding travelers your child’s age, including its “unaccompanied minor” policies

The designated airports and shuttle times are listed in your child’s site information packet. For “unaccompanied minor” policies and other policies regarding travelers your child’s age, contact your airline or rail carrier directly. Most post their policies on their websites.

- **What does the term “unaccompanied minor” mean?**

Airlines and rail carriers use the term “unaccompanied minor” to refer to children who must be supervised by airline or rail carrier staff in order to travel without a parent or guardian. There are extra fees for unaccompanied minors as well as special policies and procedures for travel days. Many airlines also restrict which flights unaccompanied minors may take.

- **At what ages do airlines and rail carriers require children to travel as unaccompanied minors?**

The ages at which students must travel as unaccompanied minors vary greatly from carrier to carrier. Some designate children ages 5-11 as unaccompanied minors. Others designate children as old as 14. **Please contact your airline or rail carrier to learn its specific policies for travelers your child’s age.** Even if the carrier does not require your child to travel as an unaccompanied minor, there still may be special policies and procedures that you must follow.

- **How much is the unaccompanied minor fee and when do I pay it?**

As with age requirements, these details vary greatly from carrier to carrier, but most charge about \$100 extra in each direction for direct flights (so an extra \$200 for a round trip with direct flights each way). The extra fee for connecting flights is often higher. A few carriers will accept payment in advance or will permit your travel agent to collect the fee. However, most airlines require the fee to be paid at the time of check-in for each segment of the trip. This means that you will need to provide your child with a means of paying the fee when checking in for the flight home.

- **The airline wants the name of the CTY staff member who will pick up my unaccompanied minor at the airport. How do I get that information?**

When booking a ticket for a child required to travel as an unaccompanied minor, you may be asked for the name of the CTY staff member who will pick up your child at the destination. Because of scheduling issues, the names are not available until just prior to travel. Please ask the airline to accept “CTY Staff” temporarily, and explain that you will call back with more specific information later. Then, a day or two before travel, contact your child’s site to obtain the name. Site phone numbers will be available at [www.cty.jhu.edu/summer](http://www.cty.jhu.edu/summer) or by calling 410-735-6277 beginning the Monday before the start of the first summer session. If the airline will not book travel without a specific name, contact your site program manager. The site program manager’s contact information can be found in your Student Site Information packet.

- **Is it possible for my child to arrive a day early or depart a day late?**

We can grant permission only in the most extenuating circumstances (generally international travel). To arrive a day early or depart a day late, students must request permission from us and, if the request is approved, pay a fee of \$75 per night. If you have difficulty with transportation schedules, call us at 410-735-6185 before you confirm any reservations or purchase nonrefundable tickets. No student may leave late from session 2.

## **Arranging Shuttle Service**

- **Once travel is booked, what is the next step in the process?**

The next step after making travel reservations is to arrange for shuttle service to the site. Shuttle service is available on arrival and departure days only and is only for residential students traveling without an adult. If you are accompanying your child, you must make your own transportation arrangements to the site. We provide shuttle service only to/from airport(s) and train/bus stations designated for each site. The fee for shuttle service is \$100 (one-way or round-trip) and is non-refundable.

- **How do I make arrangements for shuttle service to the site?**

In order to request CTY's shuttle service, please log in to your MyCTY account (as a parent) at [cty.jhu.edu](http://cty.jhu.edu), click on the Summer Programs link, and then click on the Student Services link. Since the shuttle service is operated by CTY site staff and not a professional company, late requests can create logistical hardships for the site office. For this reason, the charge for shuttle service increases to \$120 for requests made on or after June 3. We encourage you to make travel plans and shuttle service requests as early as possible.

- **How does the shuttle service work?**

Students are shuttled in groups. This means that arriving students may have some wait time before traveling to the site, and departing students may be required to leave the site significantly earlier than their flight time. Waiting students are supervised by CTY staff.

Arriving students who are designated as "unaccompanied minors" by the airlines are supervised by airline staff until they are met and signed for by CTY staff according to airline policies.

All other arriving students are met just outside the security checkpoint by staff members wearing CTY T-shirts. International students should wait just outside of customs. In the unlikely event that the student does not immediately see the staff member, it is very important that the student wait at the checkpoint until the staff member arrives.

Departing students who are designated "unaccompanied minors" by the airlines will be escorted by CTY staff members according to airline policies (the staff member either escorts the student to the gate and waits for the flight to depart, or signs the student over to airline personnel who will supervise the student until departure).

All other departing students will be checked in and escorted to the security checkpoint by CTY staff members. Because of airport regulations, staff members are not able to accompany students to the gate if they are not designated as unaccompanied minors. Both students and staff will be given instructions on what to do if a flight is cancelled or significantly delayed.

## **Preparing to Travel**

- **How can I confirm that you have received my child's travel arrangements?**

CTY's Baltimore office will send written confirmation that your child's travel arrangements have been received. If you do not receive confirmation by June 15, please call the Registration Office at 800-393-6095.

- **Whom do I contact if there are any travel changes?**

If you did not request shuttle service previously or need to make changes to an existing request you may still use the online shuttle service request system. For any changes made less than a week before the session begins, please call the site office directly. Site phone numbers will be posted on our website ([www.cty.jhu.edu/summer](http://www.cty.jhu.edu/summer)) and will be available by calling 410-735-6277.

- **What do I pack for my child to take to the site?**

Before packing your child's bags for the site, make sure you know your airline's policies about baggage including their prohibited items and their baggage fees. A consolidated list of airline fees is available at: <https://www.smartertravel.com/uploads/2019/02/ST-UltimateGuideToAirlineFees-022019.pdf>. You should always check with the airline directly as well, as fees and policies are rapidly changing. Baggage fees generally are paid upon check in.

Most airlines not only limit the number of items for checked baggage, they also have restrictions regarding the size and weight of checked baggage. When items exceed the airline's size and weight specifications, the airline will generally assess a special handling charge on top of regular baggage fees, or may not allow the item to be checked.

Airlines also have restrictions for carry-on items, usually limiting carry-on baggage to one item and specifying the size for that item. Carry-on items must usually fit under the seat or in an overhead bin. Many airlines recommend that you not only label baggage with your name on the outside but also have name recognition on the inside. As airline policies for baggage vary, you will want to check with your airline for their specific policies.

Although rare, there have been occasions when a student's checked baggage is misplaced or misdirected by the airlines. Should this occur, a CTY staff member will assist your student in making the report about the missing luggage. As a precaution, consider including the following items in your child's carry-on piece: medication, travel size toiletries (no more than 3 ounces each, in a quart-size zip-lock bag), a change of clothing, site contact information and other important phone numbers, and a phone card.

- **My child is required to travel as an unaccompanied minor. What should I expect when we go to the airport?**

Most airlines require the traveler and accompanying parent or guardian to check in at the airline's ticket counter. This is true even if the child has an electronic ticket. Some airlines will ask you to complete a form, which will remain with your child throughout the flight. For smoother check-in, fill out the form before arriving at the airport (if it is available online). Additional paperwork may be required for international flights, so please check with your airline if your child's flight falls into this category. Most airlines will issue a badge or lanyard for your child to wear throughout the flight, identifying him or her as an unaccompanied minor. Be sure to arrive at the airport well in advance of your child's flight to allow ample time for these procedures.

After check in, in most cases, you will be required to go with your unaccompanied minor to the gate and wait there until the flight departs. To clear security, you must obtain a "security pass" or "escort pass" from the airline. Ask for the pass when you check in your child. Be sure to have picture identification with you. Note that some airlines will allow only one pass to be issued. Some international cities, as well as airport security at some airports, prohibit any non-ticketed individuals in the gate area. In these instances, airline staff will take your unaccompanied minor to the gate and make certain that any needs are attended to.

Once at the gate, identify your child to the customer service agent and ask when your child should be prepared to board. Many airlines seat unaccompanied minors during pre-boarding.

- **What can I do to help check in go smoothly for my unaccompanied minor's return flight?**

To help ensure that check-in for the return flight goes smoothly, make certain that the contact information for the return flight correctly identifies the parent or guardian who will be meeting the traveler at the destination airport. Also, make certain that you send your child with a means of paying the unaccompanied minor fee as well as any baggage fees for the return flight. Your child will not be allowed on the flight if the fee is not paid.