



## 2019 Travel Guide for Students Traveling Independently

### Booking Travel

- **What information will I need to know before booking a flight for my child?**

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

- the airline carrier's policies regarding travelers your child's age, including its unaccompanied minor policies
- times Davidson THINK Summer Institute staff will be available to accompany students to and/or from the airport

The designated times the Davidson THINK Summer Institute staff will be available to meet your student at the airport on arrival day is from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For departure day, we will have staff at the airport from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Please keep in mind that our staff is required by airlines to stay with "unaccompanied minors" until their flight leaves, so departing flights for unaccompanied minors must leave before 9:00 a.m.

- **What does it mean to be an "unaccompanied minor?"**

Airlines designate children who are required to be supervised by the airline when traveling without a parent or guardian as "unaccompanied minors." There are often extra fees and specific policies for unaccompanied minors. Also, there are different procedures on the day of travel. For example, a parent or guardian is required to go with the child through security and wait at the gate until the flight departs. Airlines may also have policies limiting which flights unaccompanied minors may take.

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

We have included a summary of some of the major air carriers' Unaccompanied Minor Policy (see below). Age requirements frequently change. Please check with your selected airline carrier to ensure the information below is up to date.

- [Alaska Airlines](#) – mandatory coverage for ages 12 and under, optional for 13-17.
- [American Airlines](#) – mandatory coverage for ages 14 and under, optional for 15-17.
- [Delta Airlines](#) – mandatory coverage for ages 14 and under, optional for 15-17.
- [JetBlue](#) – mandatory coverage for ages 5 to 14, optional for 14-17.
- [Southwest Airlines](#) - mandatory coverage for ages 11 and under.
- [United](#) – mandatory coverage for ages 15 and under

- **How much and when do I pay the unaccompanied minor fee to the airline?**

While this varies greatly from airline to airline, many charge about \$100 for one-way direct flights for unaccompanied minors and the costs can go up if there are connecting flights. Some airlines will require payment in advance, others will ask for payment at the time of check in. If payment is required at check-in, please ensure your student has a means of paying for their departure flight unaccompanied minor fee.



- **Can I book a flight for a student who will be an unaccompanied minor through a third-party site such as Expedia or Orbitz?**  
While third-party vendors can book flights for unaccompanied minors, we highly recommend verifying that the flight you are booking aligns with the airlines unaccompanied minor policies. This can be especially important as past students attending our program have run into trouble with:
  - Booking final flights of the day out of Reno or if their connecting flight is the final flight of the day out of the connecting airport. Some airlines have policies prohibiting unaccompanied minors from being on these flights in case of delays or cancelations and will not allow the child on the flight.
  - Caps on the number of unaccompanied minors allowed on each flight. For example, in the past Jet Blue has allowed only three unaccompanied minors per flight, but due to third party booking, four students flying to our program were booked.

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

Most airlines do not require this information at the time of purchase but instead ask for it closer to the travel date. We will send an email to families with students traveling as unaccompanied minors a few weeks prior to the THINK start date. If the airline asks for the contact information of the person picking up your student at their destination when you are booking the flight, please contact us at [THINK@davidsongifted.org](mailto:THINK@davidsongifted.org).

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

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate students arriving or departing THINK on days other than arrival and departure day.

## **Shuttle Service**

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

The next step after making travel reservations is the fill out the Travel Form in your online portal account. On this form you will indicate that your child will be utilizing the “Davidson Shuttle” and is traveling independently. If your child is designated as an Unaccompanied Minor, you will select the “Unaccompanied Minor Davidson Shuttle” option. You will complete the form by paying the following applicable fees:

Davidson Shuttle Fee (one-way): \$25

Unaccompanied Minor Davidson Shuttle (one-way): \$75

Lastly, you will complete the Air Travel Information form to provide us with the details on your child's flight information (airline, flight number, etc.)



- **How does the shuttle to and from THINK work?**

*Due to limited space, the THINK airport shuttle is available to transport students traveling independently only.*

We typically have two shuttles leaving from the airport to THINK at two different times. Thus, students may be waiting for some time between their flight arrival time and when the shuttle leaves for THINK. THINK staff will supervise waiting students and accompany them on the shuttle to the university. We recommend sending your student(s) with snacks or money to purchase meals or snacks at the airport as the first program meal will be dinner at 5:00 p.m. on arrival day.

## Preparing to Travel

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

After all THINK Travel Forms are submitted, we will contact all families with students traveling independently via email a few weeks prior to the program start date with travel details and information. If you would like to confirm any travel details prior to receiving that email, please email [THINK@davidsongifted.org](mailto:THINK@davidsongifted.org).

- **Whom do I contact I need to make travel changes or if the airline made changes to my child's flight?**

Prior to making any changes to your child's travel, please contact our team at [THINK@davidsongifted.org](mailto:THINK@davidsongifted.org). If the airline has made changes to your child's flight information, please let us know as soon as possible.

- **On arrival day, how will my child find the THINK staff at the airport?**

Students who are designated as unaccompanied minors by the airline will be met at their gate and signed for by a THINK staff member. We will provide you with this staff member's contact information prior to THINK via email.

For participants not designated as unaccompanied minors, but who are traveling alone, THINK staff members will be waiting directly outside of the terminal area at the bottom of the escalators. Staff members will be wearing "Davidson Summer Programs" t-shirts and holding a sign with the THINK logo. Our staff will also make sure you receive a call from your student so you know your child arrived safely.

- **My student is required to travel as an unaccompanied minor. What can we expect when we go to the airport for their departure flight to Reno?**

Most airlines will require unaccompanied minors and their parent/guardian to check in at their airline's ticket counter. There is often a required form to fill out asking for the child's information, parent/guardian's contact information, and the contact information of the THINK staff member who will be meeting the child at their gate in the Reno airport. This



form will stay with the child throughout their travels. Most airlines will give the child a lanyard or badge they will be required to wear throughout their flight which designates them as an unaccompanied minor.

After check-in, the parent/guardian will be required to accompany their child through security to their gate and wait at the gate until the flight departs. During check-in, the parent/guardian will receive a “security” or “escort” pass allowing them to accompany their child to their gate. Once through security, check-in with the airline’s customer service member at the gate and ask when the child will be allowed to board.

- **For my child's departure flight from Reno, what can I do to ensure everything goes smoothly?**

Ensure your child knows the correct contact information for the parent/guardian who will be meeting them at their arrival gate. Also, please ensure your student is able to pay for any unaccompanied minor or baggage fees that have not yet been paid and food from the airport if they have a long or connecting flight and may need snacks.

- **What happens if my child's flight is delayed or canceled the day of travel?**

If on the day of travel your child's flight is delayed or canceled coming to Reno, please contact our team as soon as possible via the emergency phone number provided to you in THINK newsletters and communications.

If your child's flight is delayed or canceled going home from THINK our team will contact you as soon as possible if we become aware of the change first. Alternatively, if you become aware of changes prior to the flight (e.g. a flight is canceled the morning of an afternoon flight) please contact our team via the emergency phone number as soon as possible and before booking any other flights.

