

# Travel Policy for Students and Natural Families

While on program, students may have opportunities for extra travel. World Link does allow for students to travel if it maintains the safe travel policies required by the US Department of State. The top priority for World Link is to provide safety and security for all students during the program year. World Link will work with students and host families on travel requests and appreciate the cooperation of the host family and student in ensuring safety guidelines are followed.

World Link reserves the right to deny travel requests for any reason.

## Travel Categories:

1. Travel with World Link or arranged by FLEX or YES programs
2. Travel with host family in the US
3. Travel with host family outside of the US
4. Solo travel to visit relatives in the US
5. Travel with school trip or church group
6. Natural family visit

Please see specific travel category for other travel restrictions and guidelines.

## Basic travel and safety guidelines:

- All students will require a passport for any airline travel.
- Any personal or recreational student travel expenses are not reimbursable by World Link.
- It is prohibited for students to solo travel to visit students hosted by another placement organization, including World Link outside their cluster community.
- It is prohibited for students to accommodate other students to travel to their host community.
- Students requesting host families travel significant distances to facilitate personal travel to visit relatives/friends is not a requirement of the program and may be denied.
- Students are not allowed to travel with private tour groups as they do not follow the Safe Travel Policies established by World Link and the US Department of State.
- World Link strongly encourages host families purchasing tickets for students to travel with their family during the year to have cancellation insurance on their travel expenses. World Link cannot guarantee the student will utilize the travel purchased for them as there may be visa issues, early returns to their home country or changes in host families beyond the control of World Link.

## 1. Travel with World Link or arranged FLEX or YES programs

Travel with a student is allowed when World Link, American Councils or Mobility International USA (MIUSA) is administering the travel arrangements and supervising the student. Students may travel alone when traveling on official program travel. Chaperones will be provided in major airport hubs to assist with travel changes and assist with any issues.

Adult escorts accompany students during the international portion of their flights when they arrive and depart the US. Arrival and departure travel are booked, managed and supervised by American Councils

or AFS (not World Link).

## 2. Travel with host family in the US

Travel with a host family does not require any additional approval from World Link if the host family is present during the entire travel. Simply contact the local coordinator with the plans for the travel with the student including dates, transportation, place of travel and telephone numbers to contact student.

It is important for the student to limit the amount of absence days from school during the program year. If school days will be missed, then the student will need to obtain a signature from a school official on the School Excused Absence Approval form. See [www.worldlinkinc.org](http://www.worldlinkinc.org) > Select Families > Resources for Current Host Families > Student Travel Request form.

- If missing school for travel with host family:

  1. Complete "School Excused Absent Approval form"
  2. Email to local coordinator



The form is titled "School Excused Absence Approval Form" and includes the World Link logo. It contains fields for Student Name, Home County, Home State, Home Country, Name of High School, High School on the following month/day/year, and Name of High School on the following month/day/year. It also has a section for "Approved By" with fields for Print Name and Title, and a Date field.

## 3. Travel with host family outside of the US

Travel with host family outside of the US requires approval from World Link, US Department of State and the Natural Family. This includes all countries outside of the US, boarding countries (Mexico & Canada) and all international cruises. The following steps should be followed when requesting travel approval with a student outside of the US.

**Step 1:** Visit US State Department Travel Alerts at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) to see if country of travel is listed on this website. Students are not allowed to travel to locations listed on the alert list. If country is not listed, proceed to Step 2.

**Step 2:** Request for approval must be done **at least 60 days** or more in advance of travel dates. Student must have multiple entry access to the US indicated on their passport.

**Step 3:** Complete the Student Travel Request form. Visit [www.worldlinkinc.org](http://www.worldlinkinc.org) > Select Families > Resources for Current Host Families > Student Travel Request form. For Step 3:

1. Complete top section of Student Travel Request form. **Do not obtain the natural parent's signature.**
  2. Email Student Travel Request form to local coordinator.



The form is titled "Student Travel Request Form" and includes the World Link logo. It contains fields for Student Name, Family Name of the Traveler, Home Address, City, State, Zip, Purpose of Visit, Relationship to Person, Traveling With, Travel Dates, and Return Date. It also has a section for "Approved By" with fields for Print Name and Title, and a Date field. There is a "Comments" section and a "Request Approved" section with fields for Requester and Date.

**Step 4:** Complete School Absence Approval form. It is important for the student to limit the amount of absence days from school during the program year. If school days will be missed, then the student will need to obtain a signature from a school official on the School Excused Absence Approval form. See [www.worldlinkinc.org](http://www.worldlinkinc.org) > Select Families > Resources for Current Host Families > Student Travel Request form.

- If missing school for travel with host family outside US:
1. Complete "School Excused Absent Approval form"
  2. Email to local coordinator



School Excused Absence Approval Form  
Approved form required for international students to attend school for travel purposes.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ as exchange student from \_\_\_\_\_ Home Country \_\_\_\_\_  
requests an excused absence from \_\_\_\_\_ High School on the following \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of High School \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Describe)

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5:** Email a copy of the proposed travel itinerary to the local coordinator. If travel is international cruise, then itinerary must include all ports included in the travel.

***Do not purchase airline tickets for students without World Link approval.  
World Link will not be responsible for any travel expenses used or unused by student.***

**Step 6:** Contact US Consulate for country of travel. It is the host family and student's responsibility to know the visa requirements for international students. The student's visa requirements are based on the home country of the student. Follow process provided to ensure student obtains necessary visa to enter the country outside of the US. It cannot be assumed students will be allowed to travel as rules are based on the citizenship of each traveler. Any expenses related to this process are the responsibility of the host family and/or student.

**Step 7:** Supplemental insurance is required for a student to travel outside of the USA. The ASPE Health Benefit Program will not cover medical expenses related to illness or injury while a student is outside of the USA.

- To purchase supplemental medical travel insurance visit:  
<https://www.sevencorners.com/#start>
- Email a copy of the supplemental insurance to the local coordinator  
***Note: World Link will not be responsible for any travel expenses used or unused by student.***

**Step 8:** World Link will provide initial level approval or declination. If approved, then follow these additional steps:

1. Make a photo copy of the student's Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-Non-Immigrants) DS-2019 which can be located in the student's passport.
2. Send the original DS-2019 form by certified overnight mail (trackable mail such as FedEx) to:

Attention: Michelle Olson  
American Councils for International Education  
1828 L Street N.W., Suite 1200  
Washington, D.C. 20036

3. Email the tracking number to the local coordinator who will send to the National office to alert American Councils.

**Step 9:** American Councils will provide final approval for the student's travel. They will return the original DS-2019 paperwork with additional approval. It is important to include this paperwork with the student's passport while traveling internationally with the student. The student will require this documentation to reenter the US.

**Step 10:** Telephone numbers must be provided to the local coordinator in case of an emergency. Email the local coordinator all telephone numbers where the host family and student may be reached during this travel.

## 4. Solo travel to visit relative

World Link prohibits students to participate in solo travel to visit other students living outside of their cluster area. Approval will not be given to students requesting travel to visit other students within World Link or other placement organizations.

Solo travel within the US by a student to visit a relative or natural family friend requires approval. Relative or natural family friend must be considered a responsible adult and must pass a background check. Solo travel is prohibited if student misses school days. Solo travel will only be considered during school breaks or holidays.

Buses are not allowed for solo travel. Trains are allowed if the trip duration is under 12 hours and does not include changing trains.

Students must have an adult escort them to the departure airport and must have an adult meet them at the arrival airport.

Follow steps below to request approval for solo travel for a student.

**Step 1:** Complete the Student Travel Request form at least 30 days in advance of travel dates. Visit [www.worldlinkinc.org](http://www.worldlinkinc.org) > Select Families > Resources for Current Host Families > Student Travel Request form.

For Step 1:

1. Complete top section of Student Travel Request form.  
**Do not obtain the natural parent's signature.**
2. Email Student Travel Request form to local coordinator.



**Step 2:** Request a copy of a background check form from the local coordinator. Have form completed by all adults 18 years of age whom the student will be staying with during their stay. Email completed form to the local coordinator.

**Step 3:** Email a copy of the proposed travel itinerary to the local coordinator. Travel including stops are prohibited and will not be approved. Travel itinerary may only be considered for non-stop flights.

**Remember: Do not purchase airline tickets for students without World Link approval.**

## 5. Travel with school trip or church group

Travel with school trip does not require any additional approval from World Link. Simply contact the local coordinator with the plans for the travel. Including dates, transportation, name of school official & telephone number and place of travel. Student may be eligible for \$100 reimbursement for school trip expenses if related to a leadership or learning activity. Contact the local coordinator for more information.

Travel with a church group requires additional approval from World Link. The main chaperone leading the church group will require a background check. Contact the local coordinator to request a background check form and with the plans for the travel. Include dates, transportation, name of main chaperone & their telephone number and place of travel. Have form completed by main chaperone leading the student and church group during their stay. Email completed form to the local coordinator.

## **6. Natural family visit**

Natural families or relatives are strongly discouraged from visiting the exchange student during the program year, especially during the initial adjustment period (prior to November 1). All natural family visits must be approved by the World Link national office, agreed to by the local coordinator and host family, and have written approval of the natural family. Unauthorized travel & visits will constitute leaving the program.

Contact the local coordinator to let them know about a natural family who is asking to visit their son/daughter in the USA while on program. Encourage the student to tell the natural family to request approval through their countries HUB office. The request will come through the communication channels for the natural family visit.

**World Link cannot be responsible for reimbursing the cost of tickets or other travel expenses associated with travel not completed due to the student not utilizing the travel purchased for any reason. This includes travel not occurring due to visa issues, host family changes, early return, or travel expenses purchased before approval was granted by World Link and the US Department of State.**