

8th grade DC/NYC Trip COMMONLY ASKED ? by STUDENTS

Q1: While on the trip, who will I include, hang out with and have fun with?

Everyone! We want EVERY student to have fun, so please be inclusive.

Q2: When a tour guide or chaperone is talking I will...

Have cell phones silenced, stop talking, and listen. This includes when anyone speaks on the microphone on the bus. This is out of respect for the people that are trying to give you important information. Each student will get a chance to get on the bus microphone for a fun activity that we do!

Q3: What is the sound of my voice while on the airplane, bus, and in the hotel room?

You will use "inside" voices. When we are walking in the hallway of the hotel early in the morning and late at night, our voices will be off.

Q4: Can I chew gum on the bus?

No. The bus drivers ask us not to chew gum on the bus. You will want to clean up around you and throw trash away as you exit the bus. Remember the bus is like our home away from home and it is not the bus driver's responsibility to clean up after our group.

Q5: Will I ever go anywhere alone?

No-never! You will always travel in pairs or packs no matter where you go--this includes the bathroom at a restaurant. We will incorporate the "buddy system" from the first moment of our trip to the last.

Q6: Do I really have to wear the School Tours of America lanyard all the time?

Yes. This lets us know that you are a part of our group and it also has an emergency number printed on the card in case you need that. They should be worn daily where they are easily seen. The lanyard can't be in your pocket or underneath your shirt. It must be visible at all times. If you lose your lanyard, please let a chaperone know immediately and we will get you a new one.

Q7: What is hotel etiquette?

Hotel etiquette is knowing that there are other guests in the hotel and loud talking, banging on room doors, running in the hallways, and/or cranking music or tv volume is not permitted.

Q8: Should I bring sunglasses for the trip?

Yes. DC and NYC are usually very hot, humid, and sunny in June. We are outside all day and it is nice to have sunglasses to protect your eyes. Don't forget your sunscreen. Hats are a good idea too.

Q9: What happens if I get separated from the group?

Students will receive small group leader's phone numbers when we meet in May. Students can contact their leader before contacting School Tours. You will be wearing the School Tours of America lanyard 24-7 and there is an emergency number that you can call on the lanyard tag. The operator at the other end of that phone number will contact Doug Stanton or Connie Ecklund immediately.

Q10: Who is allowed in my hotel room?

Only your roommates and chaperones are allowed in your hotel room. Under no circumstances are you allowed in anyone else's room, even if they are the same gender.

Q11: Do I need to wear the DC/NYC Century t-shirt EVERY day?

No-only on the first day. This will allow us to identify our group at the airport. You can certainly wear it any other day if you wish.

Q12: What if I don't feel well or I am having a personal issue?

Please see your small group chaperone right away and advise them of the situation. We are here to help and it is our job to take care of you.

Q13: Are you really going to tape my hotel room door shut?

Yes. We will check in with you, remind you of wake up time, check to see if you have any questions, and then tape the door. Once the door is taped, you are in for the evening.

Q14: Can I bring my swimsuit? Will we have time to swim and just hang out at the hotel?

No. Remember this is a very active trip and we are sightseeing and having fun for the entire day. There is not a lot of rest on this trip. There is so much to see and we only have 5 days. We will be walking around a lot and having fun! You can leave your swimsuit at home.

Q15: What do I wear to the dinner cruise?

The dinner cruise on the Potomac is super fun! Students like to dress up a little for this event. While we've had guys wear suits/ties for the event, and girls wear homecoming-type dresses, you don't have to get that dressed up if you don't want. Khaki or black pants, with a collared shirt, are fine for guys. If the weather is extremely hot, boys have also worn khaki cargo shorts with a collared shirt. Girls can wear a dress or nice dress pants. Please do NOT feel like you have to buy something new for this evening. You might think dressing up is not fun, but wait until you see our entire group all SPIFFED up...it is pretty cool!

Q16: Will I get to sit by my friend on the plane?

Most of the time you will be able to sit by your friend. Prior to boarding, we will ask everyone to get in a big, long line to get on the plane. The person to your left and right would be people that you want to sit by. When we board the plane, we will ask that you go ALL the way to the back and fill the plane from back to front. Sometimes you and your friend may be split by a row, but that is okay! The flight is not that long. You can't hold seats on the plane when you board because it holds up the boarding process.

Q18: I am a picky eater. I am afraid I won't like the food. Is it good?

The hotel breakfasts are GREAT! It is buffet style with pancakes, waffles, sausage, bacon, fruit, toast, muffins, bagels, cereal, oatmeal, etc. Our lunches are at mall food courts that offer a large variety of foods for you to choose from. For dinner, we usually eat at places that offer a variety of food. (chicken, pizza, pasta, hamburger, hotdog, etc.) The dinner cruise is usually beef, chicken, vegetable, salad, bread, etc. It is a catered meal much like a wedding meal. Let us know if you have dietary needs, rather than go a whole day without eating much and then not feeling well.

Q19: Who am I representing on this trip?

It is important to follow our trip guidelines, have fun, be courteous, and appropriate because you are representing CMS, Lakeville, and Minnesota. In the past, it is not uncommon for us to get compliments about our group's behavior from complete strangers. That is our goal --- to make a

positive impression wherever we go!

Q20: Will I be able to text and take pictures with my phone?

YES! Take lots of pictures. Pictures are a great way to capture memories and share with your family. When we are in "green" zones, you will be able to do those things. There will be times when you will not be able to take photos/text when we are in yellow and red zones. We will explain the GREEN-RED-YELLOW coding system at our May meeting.

Q21: Can I bring my Ipad, Beats, other electronic devices on the plane?

Yes. You are responsible for keeping track of them, along with the chargers. The flight attendants will announce when you can have them on during the flight and when they need to be shut off. If you use these items on the bus, it is expected that they will be off and put away when someone is speaking on the microphone.

Q22: Will I be able to buy souvenirs on the trip?

Yes! We have a specific day set aside where you will have time to buy souvenirs if you want. You will NOT be able to buy laser pens/pointers, handcuffs, or snow globes for security reasons. If you do buy these items, the snow globe and handcuffs will have to get thrown away prior to going through security on the way home. If we notice that you've purchased a laser pointer, a chaperone will keep that for the remainder of the trip. DC hotels are very strict with the use of laser pointers for obvious reasons.

Q23: If we stop for lunch at a food court in the mall, how much money will I get?

\$15. We will hand you money as you exit the bus. If you don't spend it all, you get to keep the change. If you want more than a \$15 lunch, then you would need to pay the difference with your own money.

Q24: Even though we are going in the summer, should I still pack a pair of pants, sweatshirt/light jacket?

Yes. We may get a rainy day where you will want the sweatshirt or it may get a little cooler at night where an extra layer might be nice.

Q25: Can I wear hats (ex: baseball hat, visor, sun hat) on the trip?

Yes—in fact in the summer heat, it might be nice to have this on. There will be times and places that you will need to remove your hat out of respect for what we are touring. (memorials, gravesites)

Q26: Does our small group of 12-15 people ALWAYS have to hang around our adult teacher/chaperone?

No. There are times when you will be able to wander through a museum with a small group of friends and you will meet back up with our large group at a certain time. During certain times, we will conduct a headcount to make sure everyone has returned and it will be necessary for you to go to your small group chaperone so that we can count people quickly and then move on to the next activity. This will become easy and a habit after day one. You will have a number assigned to you and when we yell, "Count off...." Students follow suit by yelling out their number in sequence. It is a quick easy way to check that everyone is there. This will also become a habit and a fun way to keep track of everyone.

Q27: Will the teacher chaperones give me instructions on where to go and when to meet back with the group?

Absolutely! But it is VERY important that you listen to the instructions that are given at ALL times at EVERY location. You will want to be aware of your surroundings, pay attention to group announcements, group texts, always be with a “buddy,” and before you break away from the group to explore, you NEED to know meeting time, location, how/where to exit the building, etc. The teachers will give clear instructions on what to do, and it is **YOUR** job to pay attention to those specific instructions.

Q28: Is Time Square and/or New York safe?

It is going to be a safe area as long as you are with a travel buddy, your small group, or the large group. It is important to keep your eyes up and look around as you are walking. (Not looking at your phone.) It is also important to remember that you will see a lot of interesting people and events happening in Time Square. It is NOT advised to take pictures of people dressed up in character or people who are performing in front of a small/large crowd. People that are doing this want money for their talent and often times will want you to pay for the photo you are taking of them. Do not engage/talk to/take flyers/handouts from strangers on the street. When you buy souvenirs, you will buy items in a store and **NOT** from street vendors. We have specific souvenir stores that are student friendly and have lots of cool items.

Q29: Will I see homeless people in DC and NYC, and if so, can I give them a money to help them?

Lakeville is a very giving community and we have many students who have generous hearts that want to help homeless people. In this case, we ask that you do not engage with, or give any money to homeless people. Instead, if your heart is moved to help, when you return to Lakeville, talk with your parents about a way that you can donate money or time to a local organization or charity.

Q30: Is this trip going to be exhausting? Everyone talks about how tired I will be. Is that true?

ABSOLUTELY!!! We will have a lot of fun, but we do try to squeeze as much as we can in 5 days, so you get a fantastic glimpse at DC and NYC and possibly want to go back again someday. When you head back to your hotel room in the evening, it will be in your best interest to get as much sleep as you can before the next busy day. When we ride long distances on the bus, feel free to catch some “ZZZ’s” as long as we aren’t giving instructions or someone is on the mic. Just think of it this way--you will have lots of time to catch up on sleep when you return home. Remember your parents have spent a lot of money for you to go on this trip and you want to get the MOST out of the trip, by seeing as much as you possibly can. Enjoy the sites and time with friends and think about sleep later.

Q31: Is this trip going to be fun?

ABSOLUTELY!!! This is an awesome experience and so much fun to travel with friends and teachers that you've worked with throughout the year. You'll talk about this trip and the memories for years!