



8th Grade Guilin Program Packet

Spring 2024

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PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

[DUE NOVEMBER 17, 2023: ITEMS FROM CLI TO-DO LIST](#)

DUE FEBRUARY 15, 2024

- [Fee Balance \(Nonrefundable\)](#) — Not required for families receiving Adjusted Tuition.

DUE MARCH 1, 2024

- [Medical Information Survey Form \(online\)](#)
- [Voluntary Participation Waiver & Medical Release Form](#) (Signed)

DUE MARCH 11, 2024

- [Student Behavioral Contract](#) (Signed)
 - Student Passport
 - [Student Pocket Money](#) (in envelope labeled with student's name; optional)
 - [Student Medications](#) (optional)
 - Email j_farrell@cais.org WeChat ID to share with host family and chaperones (optional)
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Students and Chaperones will fly round trip from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to Hong Kong International Airport (HKG) with Cathay Pacific.

Departure Flight: Cathay Pacific CX 879

Please arrive at the Cathay Pacific check-in area at SFO's International Terminal, packed and ready to go, on Sunday, March 24, 2024 at 9:30am.



Depart San Francisco CA (SFO) 12:25pm Mar 24
Arrive Hong Kong (HKG) 6:45pm Mar 25
Flight time: 15 hours 20 minutes

Return Flight: Cathay Pacific CX 872

Please arrive to pick up your student at the SFO International Arrivals hall on Friday, April 5 at 11:00pm.



Depart Hong Kong (HKG) 12:50am Apr 06
Arrive San Francisco CA (SFO) 10:20pm Apr 05
Flight time: 12 hours 30 minutes

CAIS Spring Break commences upon arrival!

ITINERARY

The 8th Grade program itinerary is built in close collaboration with The Chinese Language Institute (CLI), our program operator in Guilin. The complete itinerary will be shared at our Pre-Departure orientation in February 2024. [Our updated itinerary is linked here.](#)

CAIS students will be placed in a host family in Guilin, with a host sibling from a local school. Host families house CAIS students throughout their time in Guilin, dropping CAIS students off at a predetermined time and location each school day for small-group Chinese classes and excursions. Host families are selected and endorsed by partner schools, vetted and trained by CLI staff, and sign an agreement outlining terms prior to hosting.

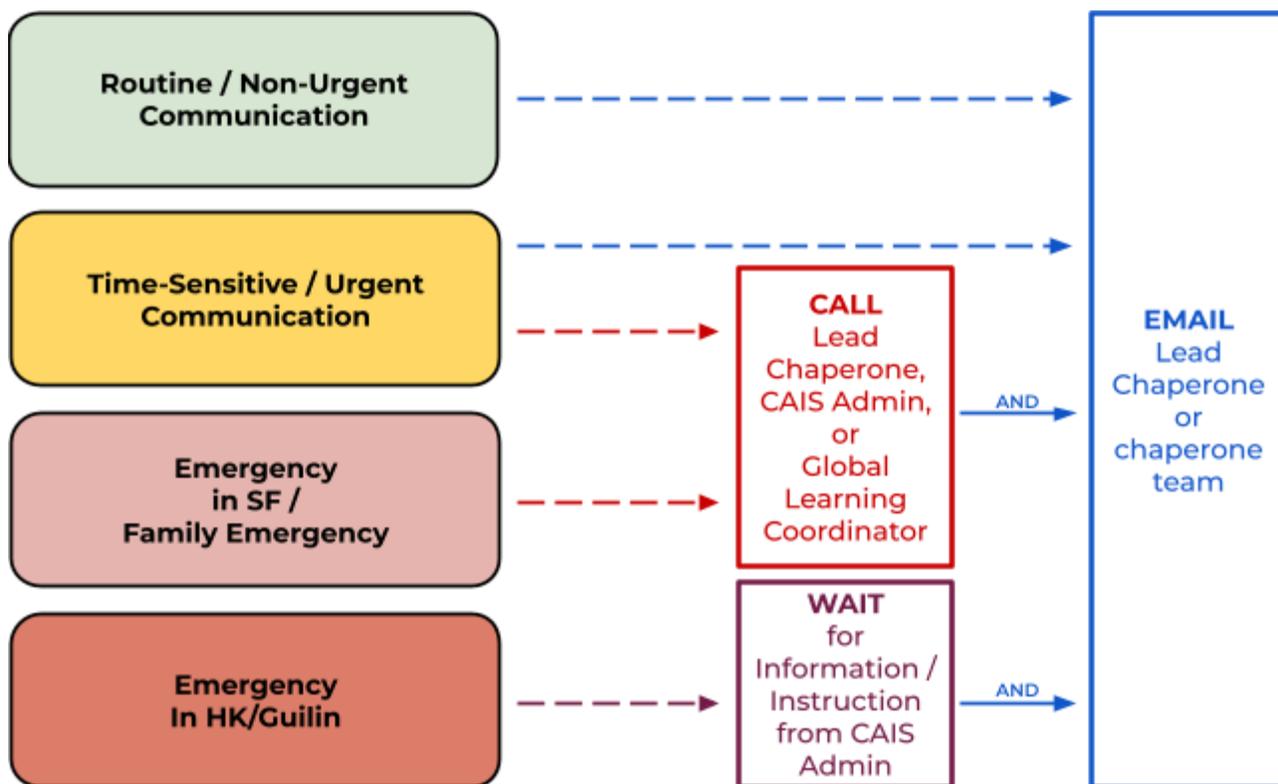
COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

General Trip Updates

While students are abroad, you can expect to receive the following updates and communications:

- Emails from CAIS chaperones upon arrival and departure
- Regular blog posts from students and chaperones (link provided closer to departure date). Please understand that with a full schedule, there may not always be daily posts. No news is good news!
- Periodic photo uploads to [Vidigami](https://www.vidigami.com). Having trouble with Vidigami? Email itrequests@cais.org for support.

Communication with Program Staff



Routine / Non-Urgent Communication

Example: You've seen your student looking happy and healthy on recent blog posts, but they haven't responded to your latest email.

Email chaperone team to check in.

Time-Sensitive / Urgent Communication

Example 1: After dropping your student off at the airport, you realize they left a bag containing extra layers at home.

Time-sensitive, but not necessarily urgent. Email to chaperones preferred.



Example 2: In your student's latest email home, they mentioned an inappropriate interaction with a guest of their homestay family.

Time-sensitive and urgent. Call chaperone, admin, or Global Learning Coordinator immediately.

Emergency in SF / Family Emergency

Example: A member of your student's family is hospitalized.

Call chaperone, admin, or Global Learning Coordinator immediately.

Emergency in HK/Guilin

Example: A severe earthquake hits southern China, with power outages and reduced cell service in the program area.

Email chaperone team, reserving phone bandwidth for critical operations on the ground. Wait for relevant information and/or instruction from CAIS admin and chaperone team.

Chaperone Team

For questions or communications regarding your child while the group is away, you may email any or all members of the 8th Grade chaperone team. Please note that all chaperones will also have local mobile phones for direct communication with students, host families and CLI faculty/staff.

Sisi Zheng Lead Chaperone	s_zheng@cais.org WeChat ID: szvxzz	Guilin Local Phone*: 17102001603
Jeff Bissell	j_bissell@cais.org WeChat: JeffBissell	GL Local Phone: 17102001611
Caroline Kras	c_kras@cais.org WeChat: karolina_kras	GL Local Phone: 17102001628
Wei Song	w_song@cais.org WeChat: bambooandwillow	GL Local Phone: 17102001656
Boyan Zhang	b_zhang@cais.org WeChat: boyanzhang2015	GL Local Phone: 17102001608
Julie Farrell Global Learning Coordinator	j_farrell@cais.org WeChat: fennelsprouts	Taiwan: 0905881546 (3/16-3/25) Guilin: 17102001185 (3/26-4/6) Int'l: 310-334-9445 (Emergencies ONLY)
Joe Williamson CAIS Admin on Call	j_williamson@cais.org	415-930-0495 (Emergencies ONLY)
Cindy Chiang CAIS Admin on Call	c_chiang@cais.org	408-317-8285 (Emergencies ONLY)

*Please note: Guilin local phone numbers will not be valid until the group enters China 3/26/24 local time.



Direct Communication with Students

You can (and should!) be in touch with your child and the host family to check in during the program. The most important thing when considering communication with your child is to have a plan for regular communication that both your child and the host family understand. Remember that calling home too much can deepen homesickness, but so can calling home too little – finding balance is important. 1-3 phone calls per week usually works well.

Students will have the option to call or email home using CAIS chaperone devices and contact information provided on the CLI enrollment form. Devices will be made available to students during certain times each day, depending on the itinerary. Please note that, in addition to a traditional phone number, providing a FaceTime, WeChat, Skype, or other wifi-based contact info will increase device availability during these times.

Parents may also communicate with children via WeChat on a host family device. CAIS families may choose to download WeChat, the primary messaging and video chat app in China, and add the host parents before the program—both to communicate before the trip and to make sure you can get in touch with them easily during the program. Some, but certainly not all, host families may also have access to iMessage/FaceTime. Expect to receive host family contact information around two weeks before departure.

Each student will also have a local phone that they can use to reach a CAIS chaperone at any time during the program. Chaperones are on-call 24/7 to take these calls and assist and support students. Note that these local phones are not able to make or receive international calls or texts. Remember: should you have any trouble communicating with your child, reach out to a chaperone via email if non-urgent, or call the Lead Chaperone, Global Learning Coordinator, or CAIS Admin by phone if urgent. Contact numbers will be provided prior to the trip.

Please note that students are required to leave their smartphones, tablets, smart watches and most other internet-connected devices at home. Please see [Appendix A](#) below for our policy on communication and technology.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Medications

Chaperones will carry a well-stocked first aid kit, and will have common OTC medications such as Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Pepto-Bismol, and Benadryl on hand. If your child has a life-threatening allergy, you are required to provide a “kit” of 2 Epi-pens plus antihistamines to the chaperones. An additional kit must be sent with the child to carry with themselves at all times. Students may carry and self-administer medications that parents give self-administration permission for on the program health form. All other medications must be administered by a chaperone. Families must submit any medications that they would like chaperones to carry and administer to the MS front desk prior to departure.



NOTE: Due to Chinese regulations, all medications should be carried in their original packaging/bottle with doctor's prescription, if applicable. For controlled drugs such as opioids, sedatives, ADHD medication, etc., International SOS recommends that travelers carry a letter from the treating doctor supporting the use of the medication in case this is requested by customs officials. Many medications available on the US market may not be available in China, therefore ISOS recommends that all travelers bring enough medication for the trip. Note that all products containing CBD or other marijuana derivatives are illegal in both Hong Kong and Mainland China even when legally prescribed overseas.

Emergency Procedures

For any CAIS program abroad, our assessment of security is determined by communications from International SOS (ISOS, CAIS's emergency services provider), communications from the United States government, information from the local police/authorities and partner schools/organizations, as well as observations at the local level. CAIS registers all students and chaperones through the US Department of State's online travel registration system, [STEP](#), which facilitates direct communication with the US Consulate in Guangzhou in the event of a crisis. Families can also subscribe to receive [country-specific travel warnings](#) through STEP anytime.

The CAIS Global Programs Coordinator, Lead Chaperone, and CAIS Admin also receive email warnings and updates from ISOS. In the event of an emergency during the exchange program, the Lead Chaperone will consult with ISOS, CAIS administrators, the partner school/organization, and the Consulate, as appropriate, to determine necessary action.

Please refer to [Appendix B](#) at the bottom of this document for information about the services and insurance provided by ISOS. All students and faculty/staff chaperones traveling with CAIS are covered by this plan.

In the event of an emergency, families can expect to receive prompt communications from CAIS Division Directors and Head of School. Again, we ask that during this time parents direct questions to these administrators so that CAIS chaperones on the ground can fully direct their attention and efforts to student safety and well-being.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

During pre-program student orientations (held during the school day), we will be introducing students to behavioral and conduct expectations for the program. Please review the materials we send home with your child on this topic (they will also be made available online). During orientations, we will address how to stay healthy and safe on the program, and offer strategies for handling homesickness, cultural differences and other challenges students may face on the program.

Pocket Money

Though all necessary program expenses are covered, students may wish to purchase a few souvenirs and occasional snacks during the program. Students may carry their own money; CAIS chaperones may also carry students' cash for safekeeping and disburse it to students at regular intervals throughout the program. Please submit any pocket money you would like chaperones to carry for your child in Chinese Yuan (RMB). Your bank should be able to provide Chinese Yuan, especially if you call ahead; there are also several currency exchanges located around SF. Students are permitted to bring a maximum of 1,000 Chinese Yuan (RMB; equivalent to ~\$150 USD) with them for personal use.

Gifts

You may want to bring a few small gifts for your host family, the CLI teachers, and any new friends. Good gifts are thoughtful, meaningful, and easy to carry! Here are some suggestions:

- Local gifts from CAIS, your neighborhood, the Bay Area, and California
- Locally-made packaged treats (Ghirardelli chocolates, See's candies, etc.)
- Students' handmade items (friendship bracelets, tote bags, etc.) or art pieces
- Notecards or postcards
- Books or magazines
- Baseball caps or other sports paraphernalia

Safety

Threats to personal safety are rare in China, and students need not feel afraid or uncomfortable while exploring the country with CLI. Fighting is a very rare occurrence, and violence is not a regular part of Chinese life. That said, there are measures that you should take to make sure that you don't have any unnecessary experiences while traveling. First, make sure that you *keep a close eye on your belongings*. The likelihood of pickpockets stealing wallets and cameras is low, but not impossible. Second, *travel in pairs or groups*. As a strict policy, we require that students do not travel alone to guarantee safety and prevent getting lost. It is always important to be aware of your surroundings, no matter where in the world you are!

Events in southern China are often punctuated by the sparkle, boom and pop of firecrackers and fireworks. Almost all major festivals are marked by the ritual of lighting firecrackers. The loud sound is used to ward off evil spirits and thus bless important events with a fresh start. If you see firecrackers, stay a safe distance away!

Security

For trip-specific security briefings from International SOS, please visit the links provided [here for Hong Kong](#) and [here for Guilin, Guangxi](#).



Language Use

In registering for this program, you are committing to speak Mandarin—and refrain from speaking English—with your homestay family, Chinese teachers, classmates, and CLI program leaders at all times (except for in urgent/emergency situations) during the CAIS 2024 Guilin Program.

Being able to speak Mandarin is a tremendous advantage when traveling in China. Put your best effort forward in Chinese classes prior to the program, so you feel ready to go. Have the courage to ask local residents questions, to start a conversation with people we visit, and to sit down with CLI's language instructors and team leader for a chat. When it comes to spoken Chinese, there is no better way to improve than to speak.

Special Considerations

Being away from home: It's a good idea to practice ahead of time by having sleepovers, or spending some time at a relative's home. If you feel homesick, remember that your CAIS chaperones are there to help! They can always offer some tips and tricks for managing homesickness and enjoying your time in Guilin.

Curiosity towards foreigners: Foreigners are a relatively common sight in Guilin, but for many people in smaller cities, and especially in the countryside, you may be one of very few foreigners they have ever interacted with. Expect occasional staring and calls of "Hello!" The stares and greetings from strangers are innocent and not done in malice; people are truly curious, and once they discover you speak Chinese, you will have a new best friend.

GUILIN PACKING LIST

How to Pack

Lightly! The guiding principle is to make do with what you have rather than to bring something for every imaginable situation. Additionally, you are going to Guilin, a city where nearly everything is available; if you forget your toothbrush, there's always a corner store nearby. With good planning and a flexible attitude, you can travel light and be prepared. We recommend bringing one daypack and one piece of checked baggage.

Bag #1= Daypack

Not more than 14x9x22 inches in size (per Cathay Pacific)

Containing:

- Jacket/sweater
- Snacks and activities for the flight
- Any allergen-free food or snacks the student will need for the flight
- Prescription medications and Epi-pen kit
- Any toiletries student may need on the flight
- Camera
- Pen/pencil and personal journal
- Extra underwear and t-shirt, just in case there are luggage issues

Bag #2= One checked suitcase

Not more than 50 lbs and 62 linear inches (length+width+height) (per Cathay Pacific)

Containing: All items listed below.

What to Pack

Clothing

Prepare layers (for warm days and cool nights and rain protection), comfortable clothes for field trips/ outdoor activities, and one nicer set of clothes. Families wash clothes frequently, though drying can take a while, especially due to humidity (there are no dryers; everything is air-dried).

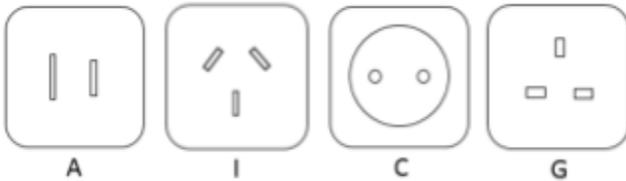
Weather

March and April are warm months across Southern China. Temperatures may be chillier at night, especially in the mountains, and might feel lower due to the humidity.

	Hong Kong in March	Guilin in April
Average high temp (F)	71	75
Average low temp (F)	64	62
Average # of rainy days	11	19

Electricity

For digital cameras or other necessary items that need charging: Our destinations use a higher voltage (220-240V) than the U.S. (110-120V), so students may need to use a transformer (to lower the voltage) and a plug adapter (for the shape of the wall sockets). Many camera chargers have transformers built into them-- check yours to see what voltage it can handle. Wall outlets in Hong Kong tend to use the 'G'-type socket illustrated below. Wall sockets in Guilin may look like any of the diagrams included below. Outlets for a third, grounded plug prong are particularly hard to find. It's a good idea to bring some adapters.



Labeling

Nina Hotel Tsuen Wan West
8 Yeung Uk Road, Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong
Tel: +852 2280 2898
荃灣西如心酒店
香港荃灣楊屋道8號

Please label each piece of luggage with student's name, home address, and Nina Hotel Tsuen Wan West address and phone number (Chinese optional).

Clothing

- (1) Waterproof rain jacket
- (2) warm layers: fleeces, sweaters, and light puffy jackets work well
- (6) Shirts, mix of long and short-sleeved
- (2) Long pants that are comfortable for field trips, outdoor activities, and hiking
- (2) Shorts
- (7) Socks
- (7) Underwear, plus bras if needed
- (2) Pajamas
- (1) dressy outfit for nice dinners and the final farewell event
- (1) Athletic shoes (this is what you will wear to school and field trips every day)
- (1) Rain boots/waterproof shoes (when it rains in Guilin, things get very wet, and we will still go on field trips! Bring rain shoes so you don't have wet feet all day)
- (1) Clean slippers/flip-flops (to wear in your host home)
- (1) Sun hat
- (1) Sunglasses

Personal Items

- Wristwatch
- Alarm clock (or bring a watch with an alarm function)
- Sunscreen, lip balm
- Personal toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc.)
- Face masks (KN95 recommended)
- Hand sanitizer (always a good idea)
- A couple packs of pocket tissues for toilet paper (easy to buy more there)
- Extra pair of glasses and/or contact lenses; contact solution and eye drops (if applicable)
- Prescription/OTC medications as needed
- Daypack/backpack for school and excursions
- Water bottle (1-2 liters of capacity)
- Student ID (some attractions that your host family might take you to offer student discounts for entry)
- Umbrella
- Gifts from SF for host family and new friends
- A few favorite non-perishable snacks
- Pens and pencils
- Camera, charger, plug adapter if needed, memory card (or disposable camera!)
- Any needed allergen-free food

Optional

- Cards, travel-size games for airport/bus, Frisbee, etc.
- Books/Kindle (basic e-readers only please!)
- Small musical instruments
- Neck pillow (for the plane)
- Pictures of home and family to show to your host family and others

Appendix A: CAIS Global Programs Technology Policy

CAIS is committed to global programming that offers safe, authentic linguistic and cultural immersion experiences, fosters independence, and builds community. Chaperones, hosts, students, and families have consistently observed that devices can distract from the immersion experience, enable over-reliance on family and peers back home, and facilitate online behavior that can promote division rather than mutual support amongst peers. We believe that the ability to disconnect from technology is a crucial aspect of digital citizenship, and see CAIS programs abroad as crucial opportunities to practice this skill. When students “unplug” from technology, we see them “plug in” to the world around them. This heightened level of engagement keeps our travelers safer abroad, and allows students to more fully *embrace Chinese, become their best selves, and contribute to a better world.*

The following policy requires that students refrain from bringing communication, gaming, entertainment, and other internet-connected devices on global programs, while ensuring that adequate communication channels between parents, students, chaperones, and host families are available at all times.

- CAIS students may not bring tech devices, including but not limited to computers, tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, other “smart” items, gaming devices, music/media players, or headphones on global programs. Any such device brought on a program will be confiscated.
- Basic digital (or film) cameras without gaming or communication features are permitted.
- Basic e-readers without gaming or communication features (i.e. only for reading) are permitted.
- CAIS students will have access to local mobile phones, which can be used for communication with CAIS chaperones, host families, and partner school/organization staff.
 - ◆ For the 5th Grade Taiwan Exchange, 7th Grade Taiwan Program, and 8th Grade Guilin Program, each student is given a phone for the duration of travel. Students are responsible for keeping their local phones charged and with them at all times for safety.
 - ◆ All students are provided with contact cards containing numbers for CAIS chaperones and other program staff, and are expected to carry these at all times.
- CAIS chaperones will always be reachable by mobile phone, by both students and parents, in the event of an emergency. CAIS students should reach out to a CAIS chaperone to talk about any concerns they have during the program.
- CAIS parents and students are encouraged to keep in touch in the following ways:
 - ◆ For the 5th, 7th, and 8th Grade Programs, school devices will be available during designated times to communicate home. Students can also ask a CAIS chaperone to make a call home at other times if needed.
 - ◆ For all programs, students may also contact home using host family devices. Students and host families are encouraged to identify a regular, convenient time and platform for communication home. Host families will be connected with CAIS families prior to the trip.
- CAIS chaperones will have school devices available for any academic projects that require them.
- When using school devices, students will adhere to the [CAIS Acceptable Use Policy](#).

*Compliance with this policy supports the program goals of authentic immersion and personal growth.
Thank you, students and families, for your cooperation!*



Appendix B: CAIS Student International Services and Insurance Program

Chinese American International School (CAIS) recognizes the importance of students having resources available to them while traveling abroad on a CAIS-sanctioned program. As a parent and guardian, you may ask yourself: What happens if my student falls ill, is involved in an accident, or confronts a security-related incident while abroad? How would my student deal with an emergency where language is a problem and adequate standards of medical care cannot be guaranteed? What if my student were in a foreign country where the political situation was unstable or quickly deteriorating? **To help meet these challenges abroad, CAIS provides an integrated International Services and Insurance Program.**

International SOS (ISOS)

CAIS Global Programs abroad are supported by the premier international services provider, [International SOS](#), for emergency medical, personal, travel, legal, and security assistance. One phone call connects trip chaperones and students to ISOS's network of multilingual staff trained to help resolve health and safety issues. Medical services range from telephone advice and referrals to full-scale medical evacuations by private air ambulance. The ISOS network of critical care and aero medical specialists operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from ISOS Alarm Centers around the world.

Additionally, ISOS's global security network is designed to assist in managing the complex issues of people, information, communications, and transportation during a threatening emergency situation. Membership in ISOS is a valuable protection against unexpected difficulties that can arise when you are away from home. Since its founding in 1974, ISOS has performed thousands of evacuations and repatriations, and provides proactive, real-time risk assessments to keep travelers safe.

Insurance Coverage During Travel

CAIS participates in a unique insurance program built specifically for students traveling abroad on school-sanctioned programs. Coverage is provided by Cigna Global and Lloyd's, and works in concert with International SOS. This mandatory insurance program for students traveling abroad on CAIS-sanctioned programs is primary in all cases. Because of the special relationship between International SOS and the plan administrators, emergency management and health care decision-making is simplified for students and their guardians.

Pre-Travel Insurance Coverage

The CAIS travel insurance package detailed above covers CAIS students and faculty only during the course of travel. This does not include coverage for cancellation in the event that a student is unable to participate, or adjustments to the departure date due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness or injury. CAIS families are welcome to seek out private insurance coverage for trip cancellation or delay.