

Traveling to London

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FAQs

FULL PACKAGE - Travel Logistics

I'm booked on the Full Package. Does this include transit to/from the airport?

Yes. All travelers booked on the Full Package include airport transit for departure and arrival. There will be enough buses to accommodate all full package travelers, plus their luggage (one personal item, and one suitcase.)

Travelers may park their car at the Foothill High School parking lot for the duration of the trip.

There are two different flight options to London. Will everyone depart from Foothill High School together, regardless of their flight time?

No. There will be two different bus departure times, which will align to your flight departure.

What happens upon arrival at London Heathrow?

After the group clears Customs and picks up checked luggage, we will meet a dedicated 'meet and greet' team in the Arrivals Hall. They will be holding LNYDP signage. The FHS group will be escorted to the buses, which will take us to the hotel. Our tour assistant will remain in the hotel and will work closely with the front office to arrange rooming, etc.

Will travelers need to carry their passport at all times?

No, this is not required. Chaperones will collect the student's passports upon arrival in London, and will keep it secured during the week. Passports will be returned to students upon departure.

My child is not a citizen of the US. Will they need to go through Customs/Immigration on their own, separate from their chaperone group?

There will be at least one chaperone assigned to the students who aren't US citizens. This group will stay together through Customs/Immigration.

My child has Global Entry. Will they need to go through US Customs/Immigration on their own, separate from their chaperone group?

No. All students should stay together, with their chaperoned group. They should not separately enter the Global Entry line.

How can I stay in touch with my child? Will he be able to call home from London?

Students will have access to their cell phone while in London. Please contact the phone carrier to ensure they are set up for international calling/texting.

LAND ONLY PACKAGE - Travel Logistics

I'm booked on the Land Only Package. Does this include transportation to/from the airport?

No, The Land Only package does not include transit to or from the airport. Students (and accompanying travelers) will need to make their own arrangements.

When do I need to meet the FHS Band in London?

Land only Travelers should meet the FHS Band at the hotel between 4 - 6pm (local time) on December 29th. Curbside drop off is not an option. Parents must walk their child(ren) into the hotel, and check in with the chaperone upon arrival.

At the end of the trip, when can I pick up my student?

Students can be picked up from the hotel between 7 - 9am on January 4th. Curbside pick up is not an option. Parents must enter the hotel, and check out with their child(ren)'s chaperone before departing.

Hotel Accommodations - For Full and Land Packages

What time can we check into the hotel?

4pm local time

How many people can the hotel room accommodate?

Most rooms will accommodate two people (2 single beds), with some doubles (1 double bed.)

Is it possible to request a room that accommodates three people?

Yes. Triple rooms (usually a double & single bed) can be requested.

I'm a solo traveler. Can I request a private room?

Yes. However, anyone requesting a double room to themselves will need to pay the single supplement. (£795 charge)

Chaperones

Who can be a chaperone?

Parents who signed up for the Full Package or Land Only Package are eligible to chaperone. All Chaperones must complete the Volunteer Clearance process detailed [here](#).

What is the student to chaperone ratio?

The expectation is 8:1.

- Note - If you also have a younger child (e.g. sibling) traveling with you, they can join the group and would not be included in this ratio.

What events and activities are scheduled for the week?

The itinerary for the week can be found [here](#). Printed booklets with our itinerary will also be available upon arrival.

Can I have my child “check out” from the chaperone group, and have them join me/our family during the week?

No. It is expected that your child will remain with the group for the duration of the trip.

When there's free time, does the chaperone decide where they take the students?

Our Chaperones have scheduled fun activities for our students during the “free” time. It is expected that ALL students will participate in these activities.

- January 1 - Bus Tour of London Holiday Lights
 - \$15 - drop off a check/cash in the Band Room
- January 2 - Winter Wonderland
 - Purchase entrance tickets [here](#) for the 17:00 - 18:00 timed entry slot
 - Additional experiences within Winter Wonderland can be purchased at your own discretion
- January 3 - British Museum
 - Free entry

Parents/Band Supporters are also welcome to join these activities. Complete this [form](#) to sign up. Please submit payment for the bus tour, and purchase your Winter Wonderland ticket(s) ASAP.

Who will be my child’s chaperone? Will I be able to contact the chaperone directly?

The Chaperone list can be found [here](#). To help our chaperones stay focused on keeping students safe, please do not reach out to the chaperones directly unless it is an emergency.

What happens if my student needs to take medication during this trip?

The Medication Guideline for this trip has been reviewed by the district nurse and the school administrator. Details can be found [here](#). There are two options:

- Medication Administered by a School Admin
- Students Self-Administration.

If your student needs to take medication during the trip, please read through this guideline and fill out the forms and submit them by Dec 17th. If you have additional questions, contact Marissa Hall (District Nurse) at mhall2@pleasantonusd.net.

Finances

Is there a recommended daily budget for my child? How much cash should my child carry?

Budgets will vary depending on your student's needs. Some things you may want to budget for include:

- Snacks and meals that are not included in the full/land package
- Fees for activities/events during "free time"
- Daily Incidentals (e.g. bottled water, public restroom fees, etc)
- Souvenirs

Are all meals covered during this trip?

No. Any food purchased at the airport is the traveler's responsibility. Travelers are also responsible for covering the cost of lunch and snacks during the trip.

There are three nights when dinner isn't provided. Travelers will receive a restaurant voucher for £60 to help pay for these meals. Travelers are responsible for paying any costs that exceed the value of the voucher.

If you believe additional funds are needed, you can add money to the voucher and pay for it out of pocket. Please talk to your student about budgeting appropriately for meals so they do not run out of funds before the trip concludes.

Parade Information

Can I still buy grandstand tickets for the parade?

Tickets will need to be purchased directly from Ticketmaster UK. Check their website for current availability.

Will transportation to the parade be provided for everyone?

No, only students and band staff will have transportation provided to and from the parade. Chaperones, parents/family, etc will be responsible for their own transit. If this changes, we'll be sure to let everyone know.

TRAVEL TIPS

Be Weather-Ready

- **Weather:** London weather can be unpredictable. Dress in layers so you can adjust to changing temperatures. It's also advisable to bring:
 - A compact umbrella
 - Waterproof shoes and jacket

Local Etiquette

- **Queuing:** Londoners appreciate orderly queues. Always stand in line and wait your turn, whether you're at a bus stop or waiting to buy tickets.
- **Tipping:** Tipping is customary in restaurants (around 10-15% if service isn't already included in the bill), but not always expected in other places like taxis or cafes.
- **Crossing the Street Safely:** Cars in London drive on the left side of the road (opposite of the US). Make sure you look both ways before stepping off the curb.
- **The legal drinking age in London is 18.** However, students should not be purchasing or consuming alcohol during this trip.

Be Cautious & Stay Aware of Your Surroundings

- **Be Vigilant:** Keep an eye on your belongings, especially in crowded areas like public transport and tourist spots.
- **Avoid Distractions:** Don't be overly focused on your phone or map in busy areas. Stay aware of your surroundings.
- **Secure Your Belongings:** Carry your bag crossbody, or in front of you. Keep valuables like passports, wallets, and phones in a secure, zipped pocket or an inner compartment.
- **Don't Leave Belongings Unattended:** Keep track of your belongings, especially in crowded areas. Don't leave bags unzipped/open, hanging from the back of a chair, or on top of a table where items can be easily grabbed.
- **Avoid Flashing Valuables:** Keep expensive items like electronic devices and jewelry out of sight when not in use.
- **Be Aware of Common Scams:** Be cautious of scams such as fake charity collectors, street performers asking for money, or people offering unsolicited help.

Finances

- **Credit/Debit Cards:** Notify your bank and/or credit card company(s) of your travel plans to avoid having your cards blocked. It's advisable to bring a backup card.
- **Contactless Payment:** If you have a contactless debit or credit card, you can use it to pay for things. ApplePay is also widely accepted.
- **Cash:** The National Currency used in England is the British Pound (£). ATMs and currency exchange booths are widely available throughout London.
 - If you prefer to have cash on hand before arrival, most local banks can help you place an order for foreign currency. Be sure to allow time for delivery.

Important Documents

- Make copies of important documents like your passport, visa, travel insurance, and credit cards. Keep digital copies in a secure location as well.
- There is no requirement to carry your passport around while visiting London. However, it is suggested that students carry their student IDs with them.
- **Lost Passports:** In the event that a passport is lost, that passenger will not be able to travel home without visiting the American Embassy and buying a new one. A digital copy of the information & photo page will assist in this process.
 - The Embassy is closed over the holiday period and so it may well be that anyone needing a new passport will have to stay extra days in London at their own expense.

For Emergencies:

- **Emergency Services:** In London, Dial 999 for emergencies.
- [US Embassy](#): +44 20 7499 9000

Phones and Electronics

- **Travel Adaptors:** The voltage in London is higher than the US (220 vs 110). A converter may be required to plug in and use your electronics safely.
- **SIM Card or Wi-Fi:** Consider getting a local SIM card or using portable Wi-Fi to stay connected. Many places offer free Wi-Fi, but having your own connection can be convenient.
- **International Data Plans:** Many cellular phone providers have the option of pay-as-you-go or month-by-month international plans. Contact your carrier for more information.

Luggage

- **Tag Your Luggage:** Tag all your luggage with your name and contact information (printed clearly). If you have an AirTag, consider putting one on the inside of your checked bag(s).
- **Carry On Luggage:** It's advisable to carry any medication, important documents, valuables, and a change of clothes in your carry on.
- **Liquid Carry On:** At Heathrow Airport, Liquids include all liquids, creams, gels, pastes and aerosols.
 - If you are carrying liquids in your carry on, items must be in containers that are 100ml (3.4 ounces) or less.
 - All liquid containers must fit inside a clear plastic bag that is less than 20cm x 20cm (slightly smaller than a quart size ziploc bag). One bag per passenger is allowed..

- More guidance can be found [here](#)

Learn Some Basic British Slang

Familiarize yourself with common British terms and phrases. Here are a few:

British Term/ Slang	What it Means
Queue	A line of people or vehicles awaiting their turn
Lift	Elevator
Crisps	Potato Chips
Chips	French Fries
Coach	A large bus meant for long distance travel or sightseeing
Jumper	Sweater
Rubbish	Trash
Loo	Toilet, or restroom
Boot or Bonnet	Trunk or Hood (of a car)
Cheers	Hello, or Thank You