



**University Prep's
Middle School
Global Link Handbook
2016-17**



Middle School Global Link Handbooks

Middle School Global Link Handbook:

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Program Philosophy

This program offers a unique domestic cultural exchange opportunity for 7th and 8th graders that allows students to immerse themselves in a new environment, open their minds to new perspectives, and enrich their critical thinking about the diversity of American culture. Students explore both the distinctions and similarities between culture and life in Seattle and Santa Fe. We expect that they will build the skills to investigate their own cultural identity, recognize cultural vs. individual differences, and respectfully engage in learning and discussion focused on the identified curricular theme. The program will increase students' cultural competence with the goal of making them better citizens of the U.S. and the world.

There is also a focus on personal growth, building relationships and developing cultural competence. Through pre-departure training, students will learn personal and cross-cultural skills needed to immerse themselves in the daily lives of their counterparts.

This program is a three-part experience:

1. *Before You Go* involves engaging in orientation sessions with the group during school.
2. *Being There* consists of approximately 5 days spent in Santa Fe (including travel time): a time for making friends, sharing customs and culture, discussing the curricular theme and exploring nearby sites.
3. *Bring It Back* is about sharing experience with the community at home through assembly presentations and other avenues.

This program is a direct exchange, and as such, students from our counterpart school will be visiting Seattle on a reciprocal visit in the same year our students travel to Santa Fe. We hope that the majority of University Prep participants will also be able to host Santa Fe students, but no one will be excluded from participating in the program if they are not available to host.

The Students' Commitment

Students who sign on to being University Prep delegates must be committed to creating time in their schedule for the demands of the program. They participate in predeparture training and orientation sessions, produce a research project, and are responsible for educating the University Prep community upon their return. The skill set that students gain by participating is exceptional and will contribute to each student's ability to be a leader in today's global community.

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Application Process

All University Prep 7th and 8th grade students interested in applying for the program should visit the Global Programs Office to receive an application. An announcement will be made in the student assembly in the fall and through the all school email when the applications are available. The application will be mailed electronically **to the student's University Prep email account.**

The Application

On the application, students will be asked to give some biographical data and answer five short questions. They will also need a parent recommendation letter. The recommendation should be emailed directly to the Global Programs Office. Also included in the application is a permission form to be signed by the student, his/her parent/guardian, and his/her advisor. Completed applications are to be returned to the Global Programs Office and will be reviewed by the Program Committee, which consists of the Global Programs Office staff, the Middle School Director, and the trip leaders. After the committee reviews the application, qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

Interviews

Based on their application, qualified students will be invited for a short interview with the Program Committee (see members listed above). The interview gives the committee the opportunity to get to know the student and the student an opportunity to share information that was not included in his or her application and to ask questions.

Final Decisions

The Program Committee will make their final decisions based on the students’ demonstration that they can communicate well and respect lifestyles, beliefs and values different from their own, practice flexibility, use good judgment, and adapt to situations that may be uncomfortable or unexpected. They must express the ability to be self-reflective and to modify their behavior and thinking in order to maintain healthy and safe relationships with others in their group and with their counterparts in Santa Fe. Students’ ability to represent University Prep and adhere to community expectations will be taken into consideration. Final decisions will also be made based on the number of available spaces in the program and any necessary considerations relating to gender or age make-up of the group.

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Financial Assistance and Payments

The payment schedule and cost of the program will be determined for each program year. Students should not be discouraged from applying to the program because of finances. All University Prep students eligible to apply for the exchange program are eligible to apply for a program grant, and every student interested in receiving a grant must fill out a grant application.

Program Grants

All program participants may apply for a program grant. Each student will receive a grant application in their acceptance packet, which must be returned to the Associate Director of Financial Aid by the date specified in the program year. **All students applying for a grant must submit a grant application**, including students who are on financial aid. The Office of Financial Aid will process the grants, and awards will be based on need.

Program Fee

The program fee will be paid in two equal installments: one in December and one in February in the school year of travel. Families will receive a detailed payment schedule, including the total cost of the program and due dates, in the student’s acceptance letter.

The fee covers ALL program expenses including predeparture materials, leaders’ travel, travel money for food en route, programming, spending money, and Bring It Back materials.

Students who are not applying for a grant will pay half of the total program cost in each installment and will give their checks payable to University Prep to the **Director of Global Programs**.

Students applying for a grant will be notified by the Office of Financial Aid about the amount of their grant and the amount of the payments due for each installment. Students receiving a grant should give their checks payable to University Prep to the **Associate Director of Financial Aid**. Questions about the grant process can be directed to the **Associate Director of Financial Aid**.

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Letter of Intent

Students who participate in the Middle School Global Link Program are making a commitment to University Prep as well as to their counterparts in Santa Fe. Students selected are committing to being delegates for our school and should understand that the leaders are devoting time and resources to the participation of each student. Furthermore, our counterparts are also putting a significant amount of resources into the development of programming and host family coordination. In order to demonstrate that they are committed to the program, all participants, along with their parents/guardians and their University Prep advisor, must sign the program's Letter of Intent. Should an extenuating circumstance, such as a medical or family emergency, arise after a student has signed the Letter of Intent, accommodations will be granted to the extent possible, but program fees may not be refundable. Each circumstance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Program Committee.

Standards and Expectations

Program participants must attend all group meetings, maintain good school attendance and adhere to community expectations. Failure to meet these requirements will jeopardize participation in the program.

All participants, along with their parents/guardians, must sign the University Prep Standards of Personal Conduct and Community Behavior/ Parent Notification of Conditions of Continued Participation and return it to the Global Programs Office by the date specified for the program year. This document is available on the school website under Inside U Prep – Parents/Families.

Documentation Required for Travel

In addition to the Letter of Intent and University Prep Standards of Personal Conduct and Community Behavior/ Parent Notification of Conditions of Continued Participation, all participants will need the following documentation.

- *Identification:* While no identification is officially required by the TSA for students under the age of 18, University Prep requires that students participating in this program carry a University Prep school ID as identification with them at all times during the program.
- *Emergency Contact and Health Information Form:* All parents/guardians must complete and sign a form providing a health history, medication information, and a medical release for their participating student, as well as emergency contact information during Spring Break. This document is available on the school website under Inside U Prep – Parents/Families as well as Students/Faculty/Staff.
- *Field Trip Consent, Release and Indemnification Agreement:* All parents/guardians must sign and turn in a Field Trip Consent, Release and Indemnification Agreement to the Global Programs Office by the date specified for the program year. This document is available on the school website under Inside U Prep – Parents/Families as well as Students/Faculty/Staff.
- *Authorization for Travel:* All parents/guardians must sign an Authorization for Travel form in the presence of a notary. The notarized form should be turned in to the Global Programs Office by the date specified for the program year. If you need assistance finding a notary, please contact the Global Programs Office. This document is available on the school website under Inside U Prep – Parents/Families as well as Students/Faculty/Staff.

Safety and Security

Safety and security are the top priority for our Middle School Global Link Program. The two trip leaders are CPR and first aid certified. The predeparture training includes safety and security sessions, and we work with our counterparts to develop a safety plan to follow in Santa Fe. There is also a home-base team led by the Director of the Middle School at University Prep ready to respond while students and leaders are traveling.

Plans

Program leaders work with their counterparts in Santa Fe to develop a safety and security plan specific to their school and community. Each plan includes contact information for their host school, the nearest police station, and the nearest hospital. The plan also lays out the steps the group will take in case of an emergency in Santa Fe or en route.

Training

Leaders and students review their safety and security plans during predeparture training and again upon arrival. The training includes working through various scenarios together and developing consistent safety procedures with which each member of the group becomes familiar. Safety procedures rely on the information provided by our counterparts in Santa Fe. All students are trained to contact their leaders immediately in the event of an emergency; if they are not able to contact their leaders, each student will be equipped with the information and the means to contact the Director of the Middle School twenty-four hours a day in Seattle.

While Traveling

In addition to the development of a safety and security plan predeparture, there are several steps taken for safety and security while traveling.

- *Medical Insurance:* Parents/guardians will be required to provide information about their students' medical coverage, and leaders will carry copies of this information at all times. The home-base team will also maintain copies of this information while the group is away in case of emergency.
- *Safety Cards:* Each student and leader will carry a safety and security card with them at all times. The card will include the contact information for Santa Fe Prep, their leaders, the nearest hospital, the local police, as well as contact numbers for the home-base team in Seattle.
- *Local Safety Plans:* Once the University Prep group arrives in Santa Fe, participants will review the local safety plans in the community in which they are living. For example, they will review school procedures in case of fire or natural disaster and they will review their host families' plans at home.
- *Daily Check-ins:* Leaders will see, engage with, and check in with each student daily. Leaders will determine if there is need for any additional check-ins with any specific student based on progress, integration with host family, and any other pertinent area. Host families will also have all the information necessary to contact the leaders twenty-four hours a day.

At University Prep

The home-base safety team led by the Director of the Middle School will be available by phone twenty-four hours a day while University Prep students are traveling. The Director of the Middle School and every member of the home-base safety team will carry a safety and security binder with the necessary information for handling an emergency involving a traveling University Prep student.

Emergency Communication

In the event of an emergency while in Santa Fe, leaders/students will follow the protocols in place at Santa Fe Prep. They will also contact the University Prep home-base team immediately. University Prep will then contact Seattle families and other appropriate members of the University Prep community.

In the event of a family emergency at home, University Prep families will contact the home-base team who will put them in touch with their student. The home-base safety team will always have the most current and reliable information for contacting students and leaders while in Santa Fe and they will be familiar with the safety plan for the program.

To ensure the most effective and efficient communication, parents/guardians and students must



communicate with the Director of the Middle School or the home-base team rather than attempting to contact each other directly as that may lead to heightened anxiety.

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Predeparture Training

All program students and leaders must participate in short predeparture training sessions. **All predeparture trainings are mandatory for participation in the program** and students should plan accordingly.

Predeparture Workshops and Meetings

Predeparture workshops will give students an introduction to cultural competency, culture shock, comfort zones, and ambassadorial leadership. There will be several workshops, which will take place during the school day. Students will also meet as a group to discuss logistics, a plan for introducing themselves to their peers in Santa Fe, safety preparation, and living with host families. There will also be one family information night, which will include information about hosting students in Seattle and information about the program our students will experience in Santa Fe. Upon return from Santa Fe, University Prep students will produce a presentation to share with the greater University Prep community demonstrating their learning from this program.

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Curriculum While Traveling

The curriculum is designed to help students immerse themselves in a new culture and cultivate relationships in a new place. University Prep leaders collaborate with their counterparts in Santa Fe to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of University Prep and our students. Journal entries and cross-cultural exercises will provide the structure for daily group meetings. The details of the curriculum will continue to evolve throughout the program as students develop their final project presentations and in response to their interests and our Santa Fe counterparts.

Host Families

All University Prep students will live with Santa Fe Prep host families during their stay. Host families are selected by our counterparts in accordance with University Prep’s host-family protocol (see Host-Family Protocol below). Students are matched with host families who have a child in the exchange program or another family at the school when necessary. An attempt will be made to make matches with consideration given to gender and age, but this will not always be possible depending on the make-up of the two groups. University Prep students shadow their hosts at school, go on field trips and excursions around Santa Fe, and spend time with their families during meals and free time. The host families provide the students a true immersion experience, allowing them to learn firsthand about the food, customs, and lifestyles of another household and culture.

Academic Theme

The program curriculum will be centered around academic themes determined each fall by the leaders and counterparts. The academic theme provides the structure that dictates the people students will meet and the places they will visit. In addition to attending events at Santa Fe Prep, students will seek out and cultivate relationships with members of the community to support their projects. Depending on the academic theme and the students’ project topics, this may include visiting other schools and community organizations, meeting with local artists, talking with historians, visiting historical or cultural sites, etc.

Individual Projects and Group Presentations

All participants will collectively develop a short introduction presentation to introduce themselves as individuals, their group, and Seattle to their peers. All program participants will also do a final presentation that falls under the academic theme and they will develop the ideas for their projects as a group. All research for projects will be primary research collected through interviews and first-hand experiences in New Mexico.

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Bring It Back

After their return, students will share their projects and presentations with the University Prep community at a Middle School assembly. This is also a time for students to learn how to talk about their experience with others in both a culturally sensitive and honest way, and to integrate it into their everyday lives and future goals.

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Host-Family Protocol

All Santa Fe host families will have children who attend Santa Fe Prep, and our counterpart there will screen each family. We ask that each host family meet the following criteria:

1. Have appropriate housing in a safe and secure neighborhood.
2. Have an individual bed for the University Prep student.
3. Provide meals for the University Prep student.
4. Provide adult supervision of the student at all times.
5. Be a family in which all members living in the house are law abiding.
6. Provide safe transportation to and from school.

In addition to meeting the above criteria, host families will provide their contact number(s) and address, as well as the names and ages of everyone living in the house. School coordinators will meet with host families prior to our arrival to brief them on their responsibilities as hosts and on cross-cultural sensitivity. University Prep leaders will set a curfew and a check-in time with each student in their host family.

Challenges with Host Families

Living with a host family can be the most challenging aspect of cultural immersion. Students are encouraged to spend as much time with their family as possible and to have patience as they adjust to their new environment. All University Prep students will bring a gift provided by the program to their family, and sharing the gift as well as pictures and stories from home is a wonderful way to break the ice. As mentioned above, students will also receive training in using tools such as journaling to help them process the challenges of living in a different culture and a host's home.

Students experiencing difficulty in their host family should speak with one of their leaders and their peers for support. Leaders will work with the student to determine the best course of action for addressing host-family challenges. If it is determined that it is inappropriate for the student to remain with the family, the University Prep leaders will coordinate with Santa Fe Prep to move the student to a new family.

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Communication While Away

The Director of Global Programs will serve as the link between the University Prep community, including the students' families and friends, and the Global Link students. The director will be in daily contact with the Global Link and will have the most accurate contact information to reach students while in Santa Fe and be available twenty-four hours a day in case of emergency. Furthermore, each Global Link group will send semi-regular email updates to the director that will be distributed to each student's family and the University Prep faculty and staff.

To achieve true cultural immersion and to maintain a clear line of communication in the unlikely event of an emergency, we expect Global Link students to be fully engaged in the daily life of their host-community and to remain 'unplugged' whilst in Santa Fe. The expectation is that students will refrain from using personal email, posting or accessing social media platforms, making or receiving text messages, phone calls and/or video chats. Students may take their devices on Global Link but do so understanding and agreeing to these expectations.

Smart-phones and modern communication devices are extremely powerful tools for documenting experiences and capturing artifacts that tell the story of an experience such as Global Link. Phones are no longer just phones; they are cameras, video diaries, voice recorders, and entertainment centers. Students may use their devices to document their experiences, but they may not use them or any device to communicate or contact anyone during Global Link. Students who do not meet these expectations whilst in Santa Fe will meet with their Trip Leaders to decide the best course of action, which include confiscation of the device for the duration of the trip.

Spending Money

The Global Link Program fee includes spending money and students should not bring any extra money from home. This program is an opportunity for students to fully immerse in a new culture and build relationships with their host families. Our curriculum includes visits to locations that support the program's academic theme and student projects, as well as significant time getting to know host families and other host-community members. While we support students purchasing a small souvenir for themselves and their immediate family, the Global Link program does not include much time for shopping. The program has budgeted sufficient spending money, which students will receive from their trip leaders to purchase gifts as well as participate in activities with their host families. By providing each student participating in a given program with an equal amount of spending money, Global Link supports University Prep's mission of an inclusive community in which all students have access to the same resources. The carrying of large sums of money is inconsistent with University Prep's philosophy and also poses a security risk.

Travel Arrangements

All ticketing for airfare and other travel will be arranged by University Prep through the Global Programs Office. By signing the Letter of Intent and the University Prep Standards of Personal Conduct and Community Behavior, participating students and parents understand that they will be responsible for the full cost of the airline ticket. All ticketing for the program will be done as a group, and to ensure safety and security, all students will travel with the group both to their destination and back. University Prep will not book special travel itineraries for individual students. **No changes** will be made to the tickets purchased by University Prep.

