

## **FLIGHT & TRAVEL INFORMATION**

Making travel arrangements to and from your child's YESC Expedition is an important part of preparing for the summer. The information provided here is designed to help make your planning and your child's travel this summer trouble-free.

### ***YOU CAN COUNT ON US***

YESC staff will meet all student flights at baggage claim. Your child will call home on arrival to confirm that we have met him or her. Even if your child arrives early or is delayed, we will be there. At the end of your child's program we will assist with check in and stay in the airport until your child is in the air. If a problem arises, YESC staff at the airport, along with our directors at the Upper Main Line YMCA, will resolve it. You can count on us.

### ***DON'T PURCHASE FLIGHTS UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE GO-AHEAD FROM US***

For All Students: Please **do not purchase non-refundable airline tickets** until you receive an email from Jean Zimmerman (liz.freese@umly.org) confirming our receipt of your registration.

### ***PLANNING YOUR CHILD'S FLIGHTS***

#### **1. Travel Early In The Day**

Please have your child fly early in the day; this offers more flight options should delays or cancellations occur. Please **do not** travel on the last flight of the day.

#### **2. Choose A Non-Stop Flight**

**We recommend purchasing a non-stop flight even if this means driving to a major airport farther away from home. Connecting flights are more likely to cause lost luggage, a late arrival to your trip start, and issues while traveling as an unaccompanied minor.**

If a flight with connections is your only option, please follow these guidelines:

**Choose a flight with a layover time of at least 90 minutes.** If your child is delayed on his or her first flight a longer layover will help your child arrive in time to make the connecting flight.

**Choose connecting flights offered by the same airline.** When using the same airline for both flights, if your first flight is delayed, causing you to miss your connection, many airlines will assume responsibility and book you on the next available flight.

**Consider flying with your child.** Every summer many parents choose to fly with their children to and from their YESC Expedition. For a younger student, flying with a parent helps to ease the transition from home.

**Coordinate travel with another YESC student.** Call the Upper Main Line YMCA's YESC office—we can look for other students in your area whose trip dates are the same and provide you with the parent contact information. For younger students, traveling with an older student companion could eliminate the need to register as an unaccompanied minor (please check with your airline for their policies).

### 3. Can My Child Fly Alone?

Our experience shows that students can successfully fly alone to and from their YESC Expedition.

#### **Flying Alone—Registered As An Unaccompanied Minor**

If your child will fly alone please be aware that some airlines require young children traveling alone to register as Unaccompanied Minors (note: the definition of “minor” varies). The airline provides either an escort and/or supervision for Unaccompanied Minors depending upon the airline's policy. It is important that you register your child if your airline requires it. Please call your airline to discuss their policy for children flying alone before purchasing your tickets especially if you are purchasing tickets online. Not only do ages vary but some airlines only allow Unaccompanied Minors to fly on non-stop flights with no connections.

Students flying to YESC Expedition registered as unaccompanied minors are met by YESC staff at their arrival gate (at the start of the program) and escorted to their departure gate (at the end of the program). Students registered as unaccompanied minors flying internationally are met by YESC staff outside of the secure area upon arrival and brought to the entrance to the secure area at the end of the program.

At program's end, if a minor student is required to be registered as an unaccompanied minor by the airline and has not been pre-registered, YESC will register the student, contact the parents for the required pick up information and bill the parents for the unaccompanied minor fees paid by YESC on behalf of the student.

#### **Flying Alone on Code Share Airlines**

If your child is flying alone and making a connection to a code-share partner airline, please make sure that your child will be allowed to fly alone on **each** of the carriers. For example, you may purchase a ticket through American Airlines and your child may actually fly on a code-share partner airline operated by Hawaiian Air or British Air. Policies vary widely from airline to airline so please make sure that your child can travel alone on each of his or her code-share airlines.

**4. Optimal Flight Arrivals & Departures**

Planning your child's arrival and departure within the recommended YESC Expedition times is appreciated (see Program Start & End Information).

**Please note:** We will always make exceptions for students flying from the West Coast for East Coast programs and for students whose only non-stop flight option is outside our arrival/departure times.

**5. Using Miles From A Frequent Flyer Program To Purchase Tickets**

Using frequent flyer miles to purchase tickets is acceptable. Please note, however, that other airlines do not always accept frequent flyer tickets should a missed connection or cancelled flight occur. Our advice is to redeem frequent flyer miles for tickets only if your child's trip is non-stop or if your child can travel early in the day.

**6. Baggage Fees**

Please be aware that many airlines now charge additional fees for *any* checked baggage. You can often pay for these ahead of time when booking your child's flight. However, if that is not the case, please provide your child with a method of payment for checked baggage during trip start *and* end. Fees vary by airline; please contact your specific airline for more information.