



Mysore, India Cincinnati Sister City Student Ambassador Program Parent Guide

Youth Ambassador Program



Table of Contents

Overview of Program	3
Meetings	3
Typical Day in America	3
Typical Day in India	3
Cost	3
Speaking Local Languages	4
Schoolwork/ Time Management	4
What Parents Need to Know: FAQ.....	4
Things to Tell Your Student	4
Forms and Signatures	5



Overview of Program to Mysore also known as Mysuru

India-Mysore Sister City Association is launched their first Youth Ambassador t program with Mysore/Mysuru in 2016. The program has been created in conjunction with Kautilya Vidyalaya a leading k-12 private school in Mysore. Students will be exposed to India's rich culture, history and immense diversity of its peoples. In Mysore, students will learn about Mysore's influence in India and the world through its literature, art, theatre. Students learn and explore in a safe environment. Students will be accompanied by chaperones. They will stay together in University accommodations and spend time with host families and students their age. Our chaperone ratio is 1:8. Program directors/ chaperones will always accompany students. We are open to including additional chaperones from the schools.

Meetings

After a student has been accepted into the Youth Ambassador Program, there are a series of meetings with the Cincinnati students and their families, the program organizers including the chaperone/s who will accompany the Cincinnati students on their trip. These meetings/ discussions help to arrange the activities, settle up on payments, and give the Cincinnati students a chance to get to know each other. Students going to India for the first time have an idea of the cultural differences between US and India, but many are not aware of the day-to-day life expectations. Students will get an hour of cultural training and you are expected to attend the session. We will set up timings of these activities at our first meeting. At the meetings, students and families will have the opportunity to learn and will receive great advice on how to have a successful experience.

Typical Day in India

While in India, American students will always be chaperoned by the India Sister City arranged coordinator plus chaperones. They will attend planned activities during the day. Students will usually travel by host arranged transportation accompanied by host students/parents. During the day, students are always part of a large group supervised by the chaperones. In the evenings, the students will retire early. All outings will be supervised.

Cost

The cost includes the price of the airline tickets and any other transportation as well as the cost of tickets and meals. The school in Mysore as well as the coordinator and chaperones will make the necessary arrangements. Students bring their own spending money for extras such as souvenirs. We recommend about 200\$

Airline and other transportation costs and costs of events are estimated to be \$2900.

This may vary from year to year depending on the activities that the Youth ambassador program has in its curriculum. Fees cover:
Transportation: Airline costs from Cincinnati to Bangalore and return as well as all transportation in the country.

Speaking local languages

The medium of instruction in Kautilya School is **English**. Communications with the Indian students will not be an issue. India is a multilingual nation. Over 28 official languages are spoken in the different regions. Each of these languages has a separate script. Just imagine the diversity of India!

English is the official language. It is also widely used in schools and colleges, airports and train stations, shopping centers, banks, and industry offices.

The official language of Karnataka where Mysore is located is Kannada. American students do **not** have to know how to speak local languages to participate in the program. The medium of instruction at the schools in Mysuru is English. Many Indian students are fluent in English and many people in India that our American students interact with can speak basic conversational English.

Schoolwork/ Time Management

We will have a planned agenda for students. Students will be accompanied to different activities. Our students will have the opportunity to spend time in the classroom. Some days will be spent in service learning and learning about the regions industries, culture and business.

What Parents Need to Know: FAQs

Q: Will my child be safe?

A: Yes! Mysore is a safe city. Our American students are always accompanied by American chaperones, and either by the host students and their families or by the Sister City arranged Indian coordinator. Indian students are fluent in English. And many people in India the American students will interact with can speak basic conversational English.

Q: How Does Communication Work?

A: While in India, American students and families communicate with each other through text, e-mail, Facebook, or phone tree. Remember, WIFI is not frequent in India, however, when we visit schools for example, we will have access to WIFI, and your student may skype you or facetime you on WhatsApp. If you want to contact your child while they are in India, you can contact them by e-mail or Facebook, but the best option to reach them is WhatsApp. This is a texting and calling service for close to free and does not cost any money when you use WIFI. Down load the app for free on your phone. We advise students to put their phones on airplane mode and use WIFI instead when in India because roaming charges are very high. It is rather expensive to text using your regular service while abroad unless you have worked out a plan with your provider. For example, AT&T offers a \$10 a month international texting.

Q. Things to Tell Your Student: What should they know?

A. Participating in the program will present challenges and opportunities to learn about how other people live. Part of the opportunity is to experience the cultural differences between Mysuru and Cincinnati. For example, difference in demeanors or attitudes, expectations about something as simple as how the shower or toilet work, or how to ask for something you need are all part of these learning experience. Also, customs such as praying before meals or types of foods may differ between individuals in our group as well as in the other culture.

Forms and Signatures

Three forms will be available on the web Page for completion.

www.indiacincinnatiisistercity.org

1. A Physician's Report. This form must be completed by May 20.
2. A Release Agreement that must be notarized prior to April 25.
3. A Medical Authorization that must be completed prior to April 25.
4. Payments have been completed as per the schedule. (1st payment of \$500 by Jan 15th, followed by next payment of \$1000 by Feb 15th. (Jan and Feb payments are nonrefundable) Final payments to be made by April.
5. Additional releases for activities in Mysore such as leadership course. This may include activities like zip lining. The Organization will make sure that any activity a student takes part in is optional and it is safe.

Passport - your son or daughter cannot fly to India without this. Please begin the process of getting a passport immediately if you do not have one. In addition, at least one parent of a minor child travelling must have a passport.

Visa: You need a visa to travel to India. This can be done online. You must apply immediately as it takes time (few days).

Also included is one set of instructions on how to enroll in the Kroger's Reward Program. This is a voluntary enrollment that assists us in providing this opportunity for students at the lowest cost possible.

If you have any questions, please call 513 886 5817 or email cincinnatiisistercitiesindia@gmail.com