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ADVENTIST EDUCATION SINCE 1920

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

Your how-to guide for studying at Thunderbird Adventist Academy as an International Student.



EXCEL: EXperience Jesus, Communicate clearly and think critically, Embrace service and citizenship, and Live healthfully in body and mind.



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WELCOME

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Thunderbird Adventist Academy welcomes high school students who are committed to excellence in education and are interested in experiencing Christian education and growing a relationship with God.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is for each of our students to EXCEL: EXperience Jesus, Communicate clearly and think critically, Embrace service and citizenship, and Live healthfully in body and mind.

HISTORY

OVER A CENTURY OF EDUCATION

Once located in the middle of the desert many miles from town, Thunderbird Adventist Academy is now an oasis of green grass and citrus trees in the middle of Scottsdale, Arizona. Scottsdale is an upscale suburb of Phoenix—the nation’s fifth largest city—and is known for its unlimited shopping opportunities, challenging golf courses, family-friendly parks, and fantastic restaurants in the midst of the desert Southwest.

Originally named Arizona Academy, the school began in 1920 when six acres of land were purchased northeast of Phoenix. That summer, two dormitories were constructed with space for classrooms in the basements and first floors of these buildings.

In 1953, the Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists purchased Thunderbird Army Air Base Number Two from the U.S. government. The school was relocated to the former airbase on nearly 800 acres of land and renamed Thunderbird Academy. Classes, student and staff housing, and all other activities were originally held in the barracks and hangars left behind by the army.

Over the years, property has been sold to finance various buildings and improvements. New classrooms, an administration building, dormitories, and a cafeteria were built in the 1970s, and most of the old army buildings were torn down. A thriving industrial program provided employment for students up until the early 2000s when the furniture factory, laundry, and packaging business were sold. In addition, the name was changed once again, adding “Adventist” to the name to help clarify the school’s identity.

Today, Thunderbird Adventist Academy boasts a diverse student population, provides a broad academic program, including dual-credit classes for students to earn college credit, music classes, along with photography & videography classes. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the National Honor Society, Campus Ministries and the Student Association (student government) as well as an after-school athletic program.

REGISTRATION

STEP 1

Apply to Thunderbird Adventist Academy

- Go to www.thunderbirdacademy.org and click on the link for online registration.
- You will need the email addresses of three people you can list as references (former/current teacher, pastor, school administration, etc.) Family members are not accepted as valid references.
- You will need the email address and contact information for your current or most recent school.
- An international student must have a guardian on the United States mainland. The name, address and telephone number of the United States guardian must be sent in with the application.

STEP 2

Take your English proficiency examination

- You can take your English proficiency examination through **TOEFL** or **Duolingo**.
- **For Duolingo, go to:**
<https://englishtest.duolingo.com/home>
 - To take the official exam, click "Buy Now" and take the test within 21 days.
 - Send official results to kford@taaschool.org
 - Minimum Total Score to study at TAA w/no ESL course: 110 or a B2. All others will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **For TOEFL, go to:**
 - <https://www.ets.org/toefl/test-takers.html>
 - Under "TOEFL Essentials" click "Schedule Your Test"
 - Send official results to kford@taaschool.org
 - Minimum Total Score to study at Thunderbird without ESL classes: B2 (8-9.5) or total score of 80 or higher. All others will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

STEP 3

Have your transcripts evaluated and translated by AERC Inc.

- Non-United States high school transcript/grades must be evaluated and translated by AERC Inc.
- Visit: <https://www.aerc-eval.com/services/evaluation/fees/> to submit an application and have your transcript/grades evaluated through a **"DETAILED EVALUATION REPORT"**
 - Students who have not yet begun high school and are just completing the 8th grade may do a "GENERAL EVALUATION REPORT". Students must have proof of completing the 8th grade to enroll as a 9th grade student at TAA.
- Submit the completed evaluated records to kford@taaschool.org or mail to 7410 E. Sutton Dr. Scottsdale, AZ 85260

STEP 4

Once you've submitted your application, English scores, and official transcript/grades, wait for your letter of acceptance!

- Your acceptance letter will be sent to the email listed on your application.



REGISTRATION (continued)

STEP 5

Fill out your I-20 form

- If accepted, a blank I-20 form will be emailed to you with your acceptance letter.
- Fill out the form, and return it via email to kford@taaschool.org.
- The Registrar at Thunderbird Adventist Academy will enter your information into SEVIS and send you an official I-20 form to use for your Visa application.

STEP 6

Schedule a Visa interview with the U.S.

Embassy/Consulate

- Once you have received your official I-20 from Thunderbird Adventist Academy, schedule an appointment with the U.S. Embassy in your country.
- Schedule your interview with enough time to finish the process before school starts.

STEP 7

Contact the Business Office at Thunderbird Adventist Academy to arrange finances

- Contact Mr. Mikey Stewart-Tapasco at mtapasco@taaschool.org or 480-948-3300 ext 103 to arrange finances and get financial clearance.
- Students will not be permitted to move into the dorms or begin classes until financially cleared.
- **See more info on next page.**

STEP 8

Submit additional documents

- See additional documents required on page 5.



FINANCIAL INFO

FINANCIAL CLEARANCE

Contact the Finance Department to complete a Financial Agreement

- Students may not move into the dorm or start classes until a financial agreement has been made.
- Contact the Finance Department at mtapasco@taaschool.org or call 480-948-3300 to make your financial agreement/payments.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

International student tuition is all inclusive!

- **Day Student Tuition** (students living with family/friends off campus): \$14,750 + SEVIS (visa) fee
- **Dorm Student Tuition** (students living in the dorm): \$23,750 + SEVIS (visa) fee
- Health/travel insurance and cost is the responsibility of the family.

INSURANCE

Health and/or travel insurance is the responsibility of the student/family. Proof of insurance is required. A good place to check for health/travel insurance is International Student Insurance - www.internationalstudentinsurance.com



PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

SUBMIT ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Submit the following documents to kford@taaschool.org:

- Immunization record (including baby records)
- Proof of a negative TB (tuberculosis) skin test taken within the past six months
- Copy of student health insurance card(s)
- Copy of passport and visa
- Recent physical examination (within 6 months of the start of school)

Students will not be permitted to start school or move into the dorm without the above forms.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Additional school supplies may be required.

- A list will be sent to you with any additional supplies needed, or available for purchase after arrival. Dorm students have scheduled trips to the store to purchase any personal or educational needs.

PURCHASE UNIFORMS

Uniforms can be ordered through the following stores:

- **Collette's Uniforms** - www.euniformstore.com
- **Educational Outfitters** - www.phoenix.educationaloutfitters.com
- Uniforms may be delivered to you or sent to the school's address: 7410 E. Sutton Dr. Scottsdale, AZ 85260
- Uniform pants/bermuda shorts do not need to be purchased through the uniform stores. Must be either khaki or navy blue.



ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

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- Even if you arrive early and are staying with friends or family before school begins, **please notify Ms. Ford of your arrival so that you can be marked as “arrived” in SEVIS.**
- Please provide your Port of Entry (airport/city where you first enter the United States), your date of entry, and your I-94 entry form.

PICKUP

- If you are flying into Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport and do not have a family member or friend to pick you up, please contact the school (kford@taaschool.org) a minimum of two weeks prior to your arrival to arrange pickup at the airport.
- Student pickups are not available during school breaks/vacations while the school is closed. The dormitories open at 4:30pm the evening before school begins after a vacation home leave.
 - For example: If classes begin on January 3, the dorms would open for move at 4:30pm on January 2. Pickup would be available after 4:30pm on January 2.
 - Other circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.

MOVING INTO THE DORMITORY

The dormitories open for move-in at 4:30pm the day before classes begin.

- If you have any questions about the dorms, please contact Dean Andrea Gordon (Girls) at agordon@taaschool.org or Dean Mark Courtad (Boys) at mcourtad@taaschool.org for more information.



DORM LIFE

Dorm Mission Statement: Thunderbird Adventist Academy Dorms are a safe Christ-centered home away from home that promote spiritual growth, academic excellence, social maturity, and healthful living. Inspired by Luke 2:52.

Dorm Mailing Address:

Your Name
Thunderbird Adventist Academy
7410 East Sutton Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

What to Bring:

- Bible
- Linens (mattress cover, bedding, pillow, blankets)
- Small waste basket
- Laundry bag or basket
- Laundry detergent
- Battery/plug-in alarm clock (other than phone)
- Desk lamp
- Personal items
- Shower caddy and shower sandals/flip-flops
- Mini refrigerator (optional)
- Curtains and spring rods (optional)
- Prescription medication if needed (check-in with Deans)

What's Provided:

- Bed/mattress
- Wardrobe/closet
- Dresser/chest of drawers
- Desk
- Chair
- Sink
- Overhead lighting

What to Leave at Home:

- TAA is a drug-free/weapon-free campus.
- Nails, hammers, other tools.
- Hot plates, microwaves, toasters, toaster ovens, coffee makers, rice cookers, or other electrical cooking appliances.
- NO COOKING in dorm rooms! Use dorm kitchen.
- Candles, flammable incense, matches, lighters. No open flame items are permitted.
- Violent or evil themes (games, movies, etc.)
- Large game consoles and televisions.
- Sexual, lewd or inappropriate pictures, posters, books.
- If you have questions about what is inappropriate to bring, contact the Deans.



ACADEMICS

Thunderbird Adventist Academy goes beyond traditional course offerings. In addition to standard high school classes we provide college credit options in several subject areas. Our private pilot program provides a pathway for individuals interested in careers in aviation industry.

AVIATION

TAA is one of a handful of high schools in the entire United States where students can take classes for their Private Pilot's Certificate. Students have the opportunity to take both the ground and flight instruction portions of their training.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Computer literacy is a basic requirement of modern life. Mandatory computer classes ensure students have a solid grounding to build on.

ENGLISH

TAA offers four years of English classes, including British literature and American Literature.

FINE ARTS

TAA's music program includes choir, select choir, band, and hand bell options. Additionally, photography, videography, yearbook and drama are also offered.

RELIGION

In addition to four years of religious classes, TAA teaches students to apply religious learning in the real world by engaging in local service projects and annual dormitory service trips.

SCIENCE

A variety of science classes allow students to tailor a path that best meets their education and career goals.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Our teachers bring the social sciences to life with explorations of the political and economic implications of past and current events.

ACADEMICS (continued)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Introductory and intermediate Spanish and French classes are offered and usually taken in the Junior and Senior years.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

TAA emphasizes living healthfully in both mind and body. Physical education classes provide students with physical activity and an introduction to sports such as tennis, volleyball, soccer and baseball.

Standard Course Sequence

9th Grade

Algebra I
English I
Bible I
Physical Science
Physical Education
Health
Computers
Elective(s)

11th Grade

Algebra II
English III
Bible III
Chemistry
Physical Education
Foreign Language
US History
Elective(s)

10th Grade

Geometry
English II
Bible II
Biology
Physical Education
World History
Elective(s)

12th Grade

Precalculus or other math
English IV
Bible IV
A&P or Physics
Government
Economics
Elective(s)

English Language Learners

An English Language Learners class may be offered based on present need. This course is designed to help students who are learning the English language with their English Language Arts skills, as well as with other subjects in which a student may need assistance.

Diplomas

Thunderbird Adventist Academy offers a Standard Diploma (240 credits) and an Advanced Diploma (270 credits). Most full-year classes are worth 10 credits, with the exception of fine arts and some electives as they do not meet every day.



ATHLETICS

Thunderbird Adventist Academy offers an extensive athletics program and is part of the Canyon Athletic Association. In addition to courses such as physical education and weightlifting, several varsity and junior varsity sports are available for tryout. The gymnastics team or "Acro" is also available for tryout and the team performs locally and occasionally tours out of state.

CURRENT AVAILABLE SPORTS

Junior Varsity Girls' Volleyball
Varsity Girls' Volleyball
Varsity Boys' Volleyball
Junior Varsity Boys' Basketball
Varsity Boys' Basketball
Varsity Girls' Basketball
Varsity Co-ed Soccer
Varsity Girls' Softball
Varsity Boys' Baseball
Acro/Gymnastics

A sports physical is required of all student athletes. The "CAA Participation Physical Examination" form can be found here: <https://azcaa.com/about/members/forms/>



FAQ

What is home leave?

We have short breaks called “home leave” about once per month, often over holidays, and occasional longer breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break. All students are required to leave school during such breaks as the campus and dormitories are closed. Please arrange to stay with family or friends during these breaks from school. Rides to the airport are available as needed.

What about food and meals at school?

Vegetarian meals are provided three times per day for dormitory students in the Cafeteria. Kitchens are available for use with Dean permission in the dormitories for those who wish to sometimes cook their own meals or snacks.

Do I have to attend church/spiritual programs?

Dormitory students are required to attend Church Services on Saturday mornings and Chapel Services in the evenings when they occur.

What do we do for fun?

The Deans of the Dormitories will often provide fun outings, such as trips to the mall, the County Fair, camping trips, parks, and hikes on the weekends. The school gym and pool are often open in the evenings/weekends for dormitory student use.

How do I purchase items I may need?

Most Sundays, dormitory students are taken to Walmart (local store) where they can purchase any personal items needed for the week.

What about phones and other technology?

Students are allowed to use personal phones during free time. Phones are not permitted for use during class and students must turn them in after curfew each evening. Personal televisions are not allowed in dorm rooms. Each student is provided with a Chromebook (laptop computer) upon starting school.

CONTACT US



PRINCIPAL

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DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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+1 480-948-3300 ext. 103



REGISTRAR

Ms. Kerysa Ford
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+1 480-948-3300 ext. 105

We look forward to having you as a student at Thunderbird Adventist Academy! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at anytime. We are open Monday through Thursday 8:00 - 16:00 and Friday 8:00 - 13:00, Arizona/MST. We are closed on Saturday and Sunday.