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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

## WELCOME

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](http://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:** <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/home>
  - To take the official exam, click "Buy Now"
  - Send official results to [vpacademics@taaschool.org](mailto:vpacademics@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. **Incoming Seniors must meet the 110/B2 score to study at TAA.**
- **For TOEFL:** <https://www.ets.org/toefl/test-takers.html>
  - Send official results to [vpacademics@taaschool.org](mailto:vpacademics@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. **Incoming Seniors must be at the B2 or higher than 80 level to study at TAA.**

## STEP 3

### Have your transcripts evaluated and translated by ACEI, Inc.

- Non-United States high school transcript/grades must be evaluated and translated by ACEI, Inc.
- Visit: <https://acei-global.org/evaluation-services/> to submit an application and have your transcript/grades evaluated.
  - Under "Individual", select "Evaluation for U.S. Use".
- Submit the completed evaluated records to [vpacademics@taaschool.org](mailto:vpacademics@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 [vpacademics@taaschool.org](mailto:vpacademics@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 Mrs. Liz Barraza at [lbarraza@taaschool.org](mailto:lbarraza@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 [lbarraza@taaschool.org](mailto:lbarraza@taaschool.org) or call 480-948-3300 to make your financial agreement/payments.

### International student tuition is all inclusive!

- **Day Student Tuition** (students living with family/friends off campus): \$16,230 + SEVIS (visa) fee
- **Dorm Student Tuition** (students living in the dorm): \$25,400 + 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. Good places to check for health/travel insurance are ISO International Student Health Insurance - [www.isoa.org](http://www.isoa.org) or International Student Insurance - [www.internationalstudentinsurance.com](http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com)

# PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

## SUBMIT ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Submit the following documents to [vpacademics@taaschool.org](mailto:vpacademics@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

**School uniform, including polo, bottoms and outerwear should be ordered at the store below:**

- **Collette's Uniforms** -  
[www.euniformstore.ai/thunderbird-adventist](http://www.euniformstore.ai/thunderbird-adventist)
  - **Password:** TAA2026
- Uniforms may be delivered to you or sent to the school's address: 7410 E. Sutton Dr. Scottsdale, AZ 85260

\*To ensure adherence to TAA dress code, it is standard practice that TAA uniform tops, bottoms and outerwear be purchased through Collette's.



# ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

## ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

- Even if you arrive early and are staying with friends or family before school begins, **please notify Mrs. Gorospe 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 ([registrar@thunderbirdacademy.org](mailto:registrar@thunderbirdacademy.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 Grecia Campos (Girls) at [gcampos@taaschool.org](mailto:gcampos@taaschool.org) or Dean Jake Prosser (Boys) at [jprosser@taaschool.org](mailto:jprosser@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)

### 10th Grade

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

### 11th Grade

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

### 12th Grade

Precalculus or other math  
English IV  
Bible IV  
Physics  
US 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**  
**Mr. Michael Tomas**  
mtomas@taaschool.org  
480-948-3300 ext. 102



**VP OF FINANCE**  
**Mrs. Lizeth Barraza**  
lbarraza@taaschool.org  
480-948-3300 ext. 103



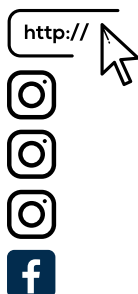
**VP OF ACADEMICS/REGISTRAR**  
**Mrs. Rose Gorospe**  
vpacademics@taaschool.org  
480-948-3300 ext. 104



**DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, ENGAGEMENT & RECRUITMENT**  
**Ms. Kerysa Ford**  
kford@taaschool.org  
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 and during the summer, Monday through Thursday 9:00 - 13:00 and closed on Fridays. We are closed on Saturday and Sunday.

## Follow us online!



[www.thunderbirdacademy.org](http://www.thunderbirdacademy.org)

@tbirdacademy (Official)

@wingsacrobatics (Acro team)

@taastorm (Athletics)

TbirdAcademy