



SYA China transfer to Italy

Feb 20, 2020

Dear SYA China parents and students,

After continuing to assess the situation in mainland China carefully over the past weeks, including the progression of the Coronavirus, the availability of learning space and the availability of flights, we have determined that it will be impossible for SYA to return to Beijing this academic year. Therefore, rather than wait until the intended date to make a decision, we are making the call early that SYA China students will relocate to Viterbo to finish off their studies.

Over the next week we will be communicating specific information about the move, including academic expectations, student schedules, etc, but today we are sending along the following information to help families with travel arrangements and to help students begin transitioning to their new classes. As always, if you have any questions, please let us know.

SYA Italy is led by Patrick Scanlon, our most tenured resident director. He has been with SYA for almost 20 years. He is supported by a strong faculty who are experts in their fields and accustomed to teaching American students in the local environment. As with other SYA campuses, the program in Viterbo has a strong experiential and place-based element, and students engage fully in the community and beyond.

While SYA China students will be sharing the physical space with existing SYA students, it is important to note that they will not be sharing classes with SYA Italy students. We have developed a curriculum that we believe is uniquely tailored to the students' experience. We also believe that it is important that the faculty on the ground have the time and resources to seamlessly provide a high quality experience for both groups. For this reason we have contracted and transferred faculty to Viterbo to make that possible. You will see more about this in the "Course of Study" portion of this document.

Travel to Italy

SYA is organizing a group flight for those parents who wish to have their child travel to Italy with the group and led by an SYA faculty member. SYA is covering the cost of the round trip group flight. In addition, SYA will reimburse for any coach fare ticket to the departure city to connect with the group for the outgoing flight. The exact flights will be confirmed on or before this coming Monday. The general information is as follows:

SYA China group flight to Italy from departure city.

Thursday March 5,

Arrival in Rome

Friday, March 6,

Departure from Rome:

Wednesday, May 27

Arrival at departure city:

Wednesday, May 27

Course of Study

All courses at SYA are year-long and cumulatively graded. Some of the courses that SYA China will continue without interruption and with few changes.

Host Families

Each student will be placed with a host family, and when that placement is made you will receive the family's contact information. We will be asking students to reach out to their new host family at least once prior to arrival. We are using the original host family placement information that you provided as well as information provided by John McLoughlin to arrive at the best match possible. Unlike Beijing, Viterbo only has a population of 60,000. The result is that our host family pool knows the school well, knows each other well and understands the needs and goals of the program.

Student Travel

Students in the existing Italy program will be traveling mid-March as part of their course of study. During that week students from the China program will be using the school as their base to engage in place-based study in and around Viterbo. Because we believe that it is important that students also see other parts of the country, we are adding a faculty led spring break trip so that the SYA China students can travel together and explore Italy as a group. In addition, for those who have parental permission and have met the requirements for travel, we will be opening up a new weekend for independent travel for students interested in taking advantage of that opportunity.

Rules and Procedures

SYA's discipline code and policies are the same across campuses. There are however small differences in day to day expectations for things like a school dress code. (SYA Italy does not have a uniform but does have a culturally appropriate dress code.) You will receive more specifics on school life in Italy in a separate communication.

SAT Testing and Registration

As you have likely already heard, SAT administration has been canceled in China for the foreseeable future and you may have been prompted to transfer your registration to another site. If you intend to take the SAT this spring, please transfer your registration.

Questions:

In the coming days and weeks you will be receiving more information about the move including packing lists, information on what to do if you left belongings in Beijing, and specifics about travel and course of study.

While we are sad to have to say goodbye to Beijing and all of the wonderful people that you have built relationships with, we hope you are excited as we are about embarking on an exciting new experience in Italy. We will be in touch with more details as they come.

Best,

Aric J. Visser

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aric J. Visser', with a stylized, cursive script.

Head of Schools and Programs