

Successful Communication when Discussing Roommates

We are two months away from the Washington DC/Philadelphia trip. It's an exciting time of year as the new school year gets underway. The process of choosing roommates for the trip is upon us. For some groups of four, it has already been decided amongst the four students. However, not every student is already in a group of four. Sometimes students will need to ask others about rooming and others will, in turn, need to say "yes" or "no" to a roommate suggestion. These tips should help you communicate effectively and protect people's feelings. Part of traveling in a group the way we are to DC involves practicing maturity, manners, and mental, emotional, and social flexibility. We want to support you in this learning process.

- Make sure all four people are in agreement before writing down the four names on the sheet. There should have been several conversations and everyone is in agreement and hasn't promised themselves to another room.
- If there are five people who want to be together, please note that this is not allowed. It is also not allowed to put three in a room unless our numbers and hotel indicate this is acceptable for us to do, which is very rare. Therefore, every room must have four people. What needs to happen is that of the five, two people and three people need to branch off together and get matched up with other groups of two or single people who need a room.
- If there is a problem with a roommate situation, the best people to help you are Mrs. Casko and Mrs. Trice. Talk to us! Parents mean well, but aren't always aware of all the behind-the-scenes requirements or what we've told students at school. If things aren't fine, don't tell Mrs. Casko or Mrs. Trice that they are and then go home crying and mom or dad can't fix it, but try to with emails and phone calls before knowing the whole story. Communicate at school, plan to work out a compromise with others without planning to get each and every thing you might want, and keep it in your head that it will be an awesome trip and an awesome time no matter what.

- Sometimes single people or pairs of people don't have a group already. It is intimidating to ask other people over and over, "can I/we room with you? do you need another roommate?" Be respectful of people's situations and welcome them into your room if you only have a group of two or three. We promise this won't be the "end of the world" to room with someone you are only acquainted with and not necessarily friends with. Meeting new people and getting to know them, while being kind and welcoming, despite differences you may have, is truly a life skill to begin developing.
- If you already have a room set, and someone asks to join you, please practice your best manners and respectfully tell the person you already have a room grouped and you have to say no. If possible, perhaps you can genuinely help the person try to find another group of two or three that you know needs matching up. If the person seems frustrated or seems to have hurt feelings, remind them that Mrs. Casco and Mrs. Trice will help.
- If you are one of these people, or a pair of people, who have to go asking others about roommates, please enlist Mrs. Casco's or Mrs. Trice's help if you feel uncomfortable or shy. We can help arrange times when you can talk together in a small group and help you through the communication process.
- Above all, we want this to be a fun trip where all students are getting mostly what they want, while understanding that there are times when one needs to be flexible within the requirements of the travel company and trip events.