Dear parents,

The time has come: your child has taken an interest in travelling alone. We understand that this can cause insecurities and worries from the parents’ point of view, but in this booklet we aim to address any problems or questions you may have. Research has shown that travelling alone is a vital step in a child’s or teenager’s development. It helps them grow and mature outside of the framework of normal daily life and branch out from their usual social groups, giving them the opportunity to meet new friends from all over the world.

With our Junior programme our aim is to provide a safe and healthy environment in which your child can learn and experience something new every day. Over the last few years, our programme has gained a strong reputation and attracts many teens from all over the world who return year after year.

We hope that our booklet will answer all of your questions, however if you have any additional worries, feel free to contact us at any time – we’re always available to clear up any concerns you may have!

Best regards,
Barbara Livolsi
Our Junior Programme ensures the participants’ safe arrival and departure. A member of the school staff or of the host family will pick up your child to take them to the host family and vice versa. Our pick up service is available from Florence airport (Peretola) and from the main Florence train stations (Rifredi, Campo di Marte, Santa Maria Novella).

All the participants of the programme are accommodated in Italian host families, living mostly in the centre of Florence or easily reachable by public transportation. We feel that this type of housing creates the perfect balance between a strong support system if needed and the chance for your child to develop and mature.

Our host families are all carefully selected and frequently visited by a member of our staff to ensure a high level of safety, as well as a pleasant atmosphere for your child. We have been working with our host families for a number of years. This gives us the advantage of knowing the families well, allowing us to make informed choices when placing your child in his or her accommodation.

The children are accommodated in double or triple rooms together with other participants of the same gender and approximately the same age. They will live a life as close as possible to that of a normal Italian family. The host families will provide breakfast in the morning, as well as an evening meal every day, giving your child an opportunity to interact with the family in a relaxed atmosphere and practise their newly learned language skills!
Your child will attend an Italian language course, of 4 lessons a day, 5 days a week. Our classes include both conversational tutoring, as well as important lessons on grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing competencies, giving a broad and all encompassing education to your child. The teachers at our school are all experienced in the field, and as native Italian speakers provide an interesting and interactive atmosphere, effectively stimulating the young minds of the participants. Rest assured, however, that there are plenty of members of staff who speak English, German and Spanish, should the need arise.

Our activity programme has a focus not only tailored to improve the participants’ language skills and confidence, but also to develop their knowledge and interest in Italian culture and lifestyle. During all of our activities the main language spoken will be Italian; this is in order to provide maximum exposure to the language, to give the children the opportunity to broaden their knowledge even when outside of the classroom. A wide variety of activities are offered during the programme, ranging from photography sessions and sport tournaments to trips around Tuscany, giving the children the chance to get to know their peers and share exciting experiences away from the working environment.
FAQ

**Arrival**

- **How does my child recognize the person picking him/her up on arrival?**
  The member of the host family or school team will carry a sign clearly stating the school’s name and your child’s name, so that there will be no problem recognizing who is meeting your child at the station or airport.

- **In case of delay in the flight or train schedule, what does my child have to do?**
  Your child has to call the person in charge of the pickup service. (as specified in the travel information you receive before your child’s departure)

**Life in the Host Family**

- **Can I expect to receive any information about the host family before the trip?**
  Yes, we will email you a detailed description of the family at least one week before the programme starts.

- **How does the school choose the host families?**
  With most of our host families we have built up a long term relationship, as we have been working with them for a number of years. This allows us to know how to deal with preferences or specific requirements. We are for example able to place those with specific dietary requirements in a suitable family, etc. When selecting the families, a member of our school team visits the host families several times, inspecting the house, the family and the general living conditions. Regular visits and evaluation forms filled out by the students help us to continually update our information as we feel that the participants’ criticisms are particularly important when assessing the families. Our evaluation questionnaires help us to know exactly which families were successful in hosting the young participants of the Junior Programme.
If my child is travelling with a friend, is it possible to accommodate them in the same host family?
Yes. We try our best to fulfill all requests concerning accommodation placements.

Does my child have to bring towels and bed linen with them, or is everything provided by the host family?
Items such as bed linen and towels are always provided by the family. The host family will ensure that new towels are provided every few days and bed linens every second week. Once a week it will be possible to get some laundry done by the host family.

What happens if my child feels uncomfortable in his host family?
We expect your child to talk to us immediately about any issue or problem that arises. We take time for him/her to understand what his/her problem is and to find a suitable solution.

Is there a certain curfew that my child has to abide by at night?
Of course, we advise the children to be home at a reasonable hour and to stay together in groups. If they are out in town, they however do so at their own risk. We ask you as parents to make the decision of whether your child is able to leave the host family after 20:00. If you sign this permission form, we should inform you that it is your child’s responsibility to behave in a reasonable manner. As you might expect, the host families cannot take responsibility for your child’s actions, so we leave it up to you to decide a suitable curfew for your child.
**Italian language course**

- **How will my child travel to school on the first day?**
  
  Of course on the first day of school the host family will help your child to find the school. They will point out the best routes and in some cases, accompany him/her to school. However as there are usually at least two children per host household, your child won’t be on their own.

- **What is the normal daily schedule?**
  
  After having breakfast together with the host family, your child will attend 4 Italian lessons, have lunch with the Junior Programme leaders and the other participants and then join our extracurricular activities. Lessons usually take place from 9.00 – 12.40. In July and August, lessons can also be moved to the afternoon, from 15:00 – 18:40. The participant will be informed about the course schedule on the first day at school. Dinner is usually served at around 20:00 with the host family.

- **Is there one specific member of staff responsible for any questions or problems the children may have?**
  
  Yes, we have a special teacher who is responsible for the participants of the programme and who is at their disposal at all times. Our whole staff, including all of our teachers, will keep in mind the needs and questions of the young participants. For emergencies we have a 24/7 emergency number.

- **Will my child leave the school with a recognized certificate of their level of Italian?**
  
  Yes, we will issue a recognized certificate stating the level of Italian acquired to each student before they leave the school. These certificates are globally accepted as language qualifications, and are the same certificates that are awarded to the other students who attend a course at the school.
Activities

Visits to other Italian cities
Some afternoons and at the weekends the Junior Programme leaders take the students on external trips to experience more of Italy. Destinations include: Bologna, Assisi, Perugia, Rome, Cinque Terre etc.

Guided Tours of Florence
Several of the teachers at school are also very knowledgeable about Florence and they take the students on guided tours to learn more about the city. Destinations include: Palazzo Vecchio, Piazzale Michelangelo and Fiesole etc.

Swimming Pool
Usually once a week the students go on an afternoon trip to a local swimming pool to relax and enjoy themselves. As a swimming cap is needed, you can send your child with one or they can simply buy one at the pool.

Shopping
Shopping in Florence is a treat for everyone! Our city offers famous designer brands but also unique boutiques – everything you could wish for! We'll be happy to tell your child where he/she can find what he/she is looking for!

Bowling
Bowling is a fun activity. It’s a good chance to stay together, have fun and even a bit of friendly competition.

Movies at School
We organize “Cinema at School” for the Junior programme participants. Italian films – with subtitles – are shown in order to practice listening and understanding Italian in a relaxed way.
General questions about the stay in Florence

- If travelling from outside of the European Union, how do I organize the Visa for my child?
  Should your child need a Visa to enter the country, of course we will be happy to provide you with all the documents you need. We recommend you to inform yourself in your home country so that you have a detailed description of the process and everything you may need to apply for a student visa.

- Which documents does my child need to take with him/her?
  Your child should bring a passport, or a corresponding document of identification, as well as all necessary insurance details. We advise those from outside of the European Union to find out exactly what kind of documentation your child needs to bring into the country before departure.

- Do you suggest a maximum amount of pocket money for my child to take with him/her?
  Of course the required amount of pocket money can vary a lot. We would suggest about 50€ / week for snacks, ice cream or the swimming pool. However, it is up to you as a parent to decide how much money you give your child for each week. You don’t have to worry about any additional costs concerning food and the majority of the activities, as everything is already covered in the price.

- Should my child run out of money, or need more in case of an emergency, is it possible to transfer money to the school's bank account?
  Yes, it is possible to transfer money to the school's account. Please remember to specify your child’s name.

- What happens if my child becomes ill or injured during their time abroad?
  In case of a medical emergency, we and the host parents will take good care of your child and accompany him or her to the hospital. Accident & Emergency care in Italian hospitals is free. Should your child however need to visit a doctor, either you or your child’s health insurance will have to cover the costs.