



**Songahm Academic Program**  
**Parents’ Handbook – 2025**

Hello Parents/Guardians –

Thank you for supporting your child so far in the application process and preparations for the Songahm Academic Program Handbook. Please go over this handbook with your student(s). You may choose to print it out or save or flag for your records. Here is what will be covered in this document:

Payment of Program Fee.....3

Travel.....3

About the Climate & Community.....3

Logistics of Visiting your Student.....4

Mail.....4

Chaperones.....5

Food.....5

Fishing.....5

Safety.....6

Curfew.....8

Online Classes / Internet / Phone Use.....8

Curriculum & Credits.....8

Weekends.....9

Fall Nationals.....9

Film and Video (Rights, and Usage).....9

Contact Information.....10



## Payment of Program Fee

The **\$1000 program fee is due June 30th (postmarked by that date)**. This has been extended to the 1st week of September. Must be paid in full at the time a student is picked up in Ketchikan. The program covers your student's lodgings in Whale Pass, travel from Ketchikan to Prince of Wales Island, Alaska to and back (ferry), for all meals for the duration of the program, the student's flight to Fall Nationals Tournament and all transportation, instruction and materials once here besides what is specified to bring (see Packing List.)

The fee of \$1000 can be paid with a **check made out to *Whale Pass ASC*** sent to: **Whale Pass ASC, P.O. Box WWP, Ketchikan, AK 99950**. If you requested a Needs-based Scholarship on your application, we will be communicating with you about this soon.

## Travel

The ferry tickets to get your student from Ketchikan, Alaska to Prince of Wales Island, Alaska and back are already reserved, but you must purchase your student's flights from your home airport to Ketchikan, Alaska and arrange to meet and pick up your student at Fall Nationals. Hotels and tournament entry fees are the responsibility of the student and their family unless additional arrangements have been made. We recommend that you make all reservations and pay the entry fees as soon as possible, as the prices may increase as it gets closer to the travel dates. If your student does not plan to attend Fall Nationals please coordinate with the program for return trips. Alaska Airlines is the only airline that flies into Ketchikan, AK, usually through Seattle from "down south," (as we call the continental U.S.).

The students each need to arrive in Ketchikan and meet at the Inter Island Ferry terminal Sept 12th between 12 and 2pm.

## About the Climate & Community

Whale Pass is located on Prince of Wales island in the Alexander Archipelago that makes up Southeast Alaska. It is nestled in the Tongass National Rainforest, which is part of the largest contiguous temperate rainforest in the world. Our climate is wet with moderate temperatures (temperatures anywhere from 30 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit might be experienced in the time frame of our program, but mostly temperatures of 40 - 65 degrees can be expected.) We may have a bit of snow in late October but mostly we'll have a mixture of sunny days, overcast/cloudy days, and a fair amount of rain... often for days, sometimes for weeks. The packing list details what is needed in our climate— please take it seriously.

Our town is situated around the edges of a protected bay. All students will be housed on the school property or in nearby cabins a short drive from the school. There

are no hospitals, gas stations, or restaurants. Any exploring in the surrounding natural areas will be done during school chaperoned activities only. In order to ensure their safety, students must realize the importance of staying in touch with chaperones and staff at all times.

For medical emergencies we can't handle, we are able to transport students in a school district vehicle or ambulance to the medical clinic in Craig (about 70 miles away) or by a helicopter sent from Ketchikan (as soon as weather permits.)

Currently in town we have about 50 year-round residents, so many of us wear many hats to keep things running– providing leadership opportunities for anyone willing! We are a tight-knit community made up of pretty self-sufficient individuals, but who also are there for each other whenever needed– a lot of hardy, “salty,” good souls. We have a small public library.

### Logistics of Visiting your Student

If you are curious about whether you or other family members can visit, the answer is yes– here are some of the logistics.

The ferry to Prince of Wales Island **leaves** Ketchikan at **3pm** to **Hollis**. It **arrives** in Ketchikan at **11am**. I recommend departing flights from Ketchikan leave around 1pm or later to account for delays and for the time it takes to get from the ferry to the airport. I have included the link to the Inter-Island Ferry for your reference. The ferry is an economical and pleasant trip with a nice cafeteria on board that serves excellent food.

<https://interislandferry.com/tickets/ketchikan-to-hollis/>

Also included is the link to the small airline that services Prince of Wales Island. If this is an option you choose, you would travel to the airport in Klawock, Alaska from Ketchikan. I have found the small airline to be useful when scheduling does not work well with flight and ferry times. It gives you additional options.

<https://islandairx.com/>

Rental cars can be arranged or you can coordinate with us for pickup.

A cabin can be arranged with us for \$50 night during the program (one available). Or we can provide links upon request to additional local options.

### Mail

For anything you wish to send to your student (belongings they don't want to travel with, letters or care packages from home, orders from Amazon, etc.) the following address can be used:

(Student's Name)  
% Whale Pass School

PO Box WWP  
Ketchikan, AK 99950

You can order things for your student –Amazon Prime ships Free to Ketchikan, when some places won't ship here at all.

Mail arrives twice a week on a float plane– it takes at least two weeks, generally, for things ordered or sent to arrive in Whale Pass. When things ordered say they have been “Delivered,” that really means they have reached Ketchikan. From there it may take up to a week to be transported to Ketchikan on the float plane.

### Chaperones

The boys will be housed with one male chaperone who is the Taekwondo instructor for the program. The girls will be housed with one of the Taekwondo moms who is accompanying her daughter for the program. Each chaperone, coordinator, and instructor for the program has (or will have) a fingerprint-based comprehensive background check completed.

Garrett Richards is the chaperone for the boys. He is a certified Taekwondo instructor and owner of his own martial arts academy. The location of the boys' housing is on school grounds. He will also be the full time Taekwondo instructor for the program.

The host parent for the girls is Christy Ealy, coming for the program with her daughter. She is well versed in the Taekwondo world and an excellent chaperone. She is a good cook and organized, as well.

### Food

Breakfasts, lunch and family style dinners for students will be provided by the school. They will have some bulk foods stocked up, but fresh items are ordered once a week from a grocery store in Klawock. If the students want to help cook a meal, I bet that would be welcomed! Feel free to send your student with a few recipes from home! Lunch on school days will be provided at the school by the school.

Your child will be provided with everything they need to eat, but if you wish to send any special foods or snacks you can do so via Amazon (for shelf-stable foods, free shipping with Prime so a better deal than the grocery store). Amazon orders take about 2 weeks to arrive.

### Fishing

While this is not a huge part of our program, we know some of the kids are excited about this and we are hoping to give each of them the opportunity to go out fishing on a

boat at least once. They are welcome to fish off the docks during downtime whenever it is okay with their chaperone. There will be some poles and tackle around that they can use.

In the state of Alaska, nonresidents who are 16 or older need a license to fish. (Nonresidents 15 and younger do not need a license.) For the day they are able to go out on a boat (if they choose to), a one-day nonresident license can be purchased for \$15 (extra fee for a King Salmon Stamp allowing you to keep a King Salmon.. but it's unlikely they will catch one.) We need to wait until we know what day your student is going to be able to go out, but when the time comes these can be purchased online here: [Welcome to the ADF&G Store - State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game Online Store](#)

## Safety

Whale Pass is safer than other places in a lot of ways with a limited number of people around (who are well known to us), smaller chance of viral contagions, and the kids will not have access to drugs or alcohol. We do have other hazards to take precautions about, however. Our top safety issues to consider include time on the water, black bears, and cold + wet conditions. We will discuss the rules we will have in place to mitigate those dangers. The students will need to sign an agreement to abide by which will be enforced with reminders and privileges lost if they are not followed. Please support us by encouraging your child to follow these rules as well.

**Water Safety**– The students will be required to wear a life jacket (provided) any time they are in a kayak or any kind of boat. There will be chances to go out on boats and to kayak with experienced adult guides.

**Wildlife Safety**– The students will be given training on what to do in the case of black bear or other animal encounters. Chances are they will not encounter dangerous wildlife around the school. In all other settings we will be traveling in groups and certainly be making enough noise to keep wildlife away.

**Wet + Cold Climate**– Part of avoiding the risk of hypothermia, are the rules listed above about where and how to explore, as well as the wearing of appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. The Packing List is specific enough to make sure that students will have the appropriate clothing for each activity if they follow it. Anything you/they are not able to find or purchase, can be rounded up by us on our end if you let us know. We have to be prepared for unexpected situations in Alaska (and anywhere, but you really feel the effects of being unprepared here, and sometimes it's a big deal) like being stranded somewhere, caught in stormy weather, etc. In-depth training on this topic–Cold-water and Wilderness Survival–will be given to the students toward the end of September, but they will be instructed as far as they need to know for the program during Orientation. Students should expect to be outside in wet weather and need to arrive with the needed clothing and gear for the climate, or having given notice of what

they still need with time for us to round it up (a month before the start of the program). Please make sure your student(s) have sturdy, tall, waterproof rain boots plus waterproof rain pants and coat.

**OPTIONAL: Medical Emergencies Medivac**  
(Options for Medivac Insurance-Coverage)

**Guardian Flight (AirMedCare Network)**

Price: Alaska 1-year \$125 (household); 21-day short-term \$50.

What it does: If you're flown by an AMCN provider, members owe no out-of-pocket costs for the flight.

Where: Statewide; Guardian operates a base in Ketchikan (serving the POW region).

Enroll: [airmedcarenetwork.com/landing/alaska](http://airmedcarenetwork.com/landing/alaska).  
AirMedCare Network  
[guardianflight.com](http://guardianflight.com)

**LifeMed Alaska**

Price: \$149/year (individual) + \$99/year per additional family member; 30-day visitor plan \$49.

What it does: When transported by LifeMed, they work with your insurer and accept reimbursement as payment-in-full (no surprise patient balance for members).

Where: Statewide critical-care air ambulance with multiple Alaska bases.

Enroll: [lifemedalaska.com](http://lifemedalaska.com) (Membership).

**Airlift Northwest (UW Medicine)**

Price: \$60/year per household (Southeast Alaska).

What it does: Secondary to your insurance—for emergency, medically necessary flights to the closest appropriate facility, only your insurer is billed; membership covers the patient-responsibility portion.

Where: Bases across Southeast Alaska and Washington.

Enroll: [uwmedicine.org/airliftnw/membership](http://uwmedicine.org/airliftnw/membership).

Notes for families: Memberships apply only if that provider performs the transport; dispatch is determined by EMS/medical staff and weather/availability. Always call 911 or your clinic first in an emergency.

## Curfew

Among the program rules is a curfew. The curfew for the students to be back at their own house for the night is 9 PM on school nights, and 10:30 PM on non-school nights, unless an exception is made beforehand by the Program Coordinator and chaperones for a special event or activity (low tide walk with flashlights or stargazing with an adult, for example.) The chaperone may set the curfew earlier at their discretion, but no later. Breaking the curfew will lead to disciplinary actions involving your student's chaperone, the program Coordinator, and possibly the School District, with consequences potentially including dismissal from the program and early return home if the problem continues.

## Online Classes / Internet / Phone Use

If your student needs to take a class that isn't offered here (we only have one teacher for their core classes, however math classes will most likely be offered at different levels online) they are able to take an online class, and could complete work for extra online classes outside of school time. They will have internet access and laptops for their use at the school, and if they bring their own laptop or other device they can use the internet outside of school time.

We do not have cell service in Whale Pass, but your child should be able to do wi-fi texting and calls from the school. Cell phone use will not be permitted during school hours or during required activities, except for taking photos or if using a certain app. for a class or in the field. Other rules for electronics use at home will be up to the discretion of the host parent.

## Curriculum & Credits

The breakdown of the classes and the credits that will be received are shown below. For the students' classes (apart from math), we will be offering place-based curriculum integrated with their other courses.

Target Credits: 3.5 total

- Alaskan Natural & Environmental Studies (Science) – 0.5 credit
- English (Journaling/English I or II) – 0.5 credit
- Math (via ALEKS) – 0.25 credit
- Alaskan Cultural Studies (Social Studies) – 0.5 credit
- Cinematography – 0.5 credit (Course Title: This is Who we ARE)
- Photography – 0.25 credit
- AI Technologies – 0.5 credit (Course Title: Iterative Classroom AI)
- Taekwondo/PE – 0.5 credit

(note, 0.5 credit = 80 hours of instruction)

## Weekends

Our regular program schedule follows a Monday–Thursday academic block format, which aligns with the broader Southeast Island School District calendar. Fridays and Saturdays offer structured outdoor adventures led by experienced local guides or program staff—this may include guided hikes, paddling excursions, foraging, or beachcombing, depending on weather and opportunity. If a particularly good weather day occurs earlier in the week, we may shift the adventure accordingly. Most Saturday evenings include a group dinner and game night.

Sundays are reserved for rest, personal time, and optional activities. For students who are interested, a small local church meets in the Whale Pass library. Students may also organize movie nights or informal gatherings if an adult chaperone is available.

## Fall Nationals

Attending the Fall Nationals in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania is the grand finale of the program. View their website here: <https://atamartialarts.com/events/fall-nationals/> Attending and Participating in the Fall Nationals is optional.

## Film and Video (Rights, and Usage)

Photos and videos from the Songahm Academic program will be used for self-promotion for different martial artists. The goal is to help martial artists learn to self-promote and tell unique stories about their journeys.

Photos, video, and images may be used for promotion of the program shared by the Southeast Island School District, ATA, international and Songahm martial arts club. It is important to also understand that the individual martial artist will have permission to use the content that they create and that your son or daughter may be included in other videos with the understanding of respectful usage of their likeness and us practicing discipline and respect that our core values of Taekwondo. SISD will make every opportunity to protect student privacy and safety, while modeling respectful, ethical, and legal usage of copy written material helping students gain an understanding of copyright and individual personal rights in the art of creating content. Industry professionals will be joining us as guest speakers, helping them gain a broader industry understanding of these topics.

There may be the opportunity for commercial promotions, these will be communicated separately from the overall programs release and usage of content. This will be in an effort to model for our students, the respect of their privacy, but also the opportunity of recognition.

# Songahm Academic Program

## Contact Information

**Whale Pass School:** 907-846-5320

**Songahm Academic Program Coordinator** – Michelle Dempsey: 907-617-5114 (cell)  
mdempsey@sisd.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box WWP, Ketchikan, AK 99950

**Teachers of Classes for SAP Students** – Laurie Lapan: [llapan@sisd.org](mailto:llapan@sisd.org)  
Matt Gore : [magore@sisd.org](mailto:magore@sisd.org)