



Health & Safety

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Essential Travel Information for your Trip

Travel safely, return healthy

Throughout this booklet, the term 'Party Leader' means the named individual who has the booking contract with Equity Inspiring Learning Ltd and 'supervisory adult' means any other person who accompanies the party in a supervisory capacity (whether that person is a teacher, a parent or other adult).

Our Commitment to You

We wish you a fun-filled, enjoyable and educational trip. But we also want you to stay safe and healthy during your travels.

We are committed to selecting transport, accommodation, activities and excursions that have good health and safety provisions in place.

School Travel Forum (STF)

As a member of the industry recognised School Travel Forum (STF), you can be assured that Equity has assessed your trip specifically with the safety of children in mind and that we are audited to ensure our safety management systems comply with the highest standards.

For information about the STF, or to obtain a copy of their Code of Practice visit:

www.schooltravelforum.com

Our membership certification and our Health and Safety Policy can be downloaded from our websites or sent to you on request.

Risk Assessment

As a Party Leader, we understand your responsibility to your student group to risk assess the trip you plan to take. We will support you by providing you with key information and where relevant will complete forms to the satisfaction of your Local Education Authority or governing body.

We have the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge accreditation, which many Local Authority Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) Officers accept as full substitution for the External Provider Questionnaire.

Our accreditation certification can be downloaded from our website or sent to you on request.

For information about the OEAP visit:

<http://www.outdooreducationadvisers.co.uk>

and for information about the LOTC scheme visit:

<http://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/>

Public Liability Insurance and Financial Security

Our duty of care to you includes having Tour Operator Public Liability insurance cover of £10 million and protecting your payments made to us by way of ABTA and ATOL financial bonding.



Essential Health and Safety Information

To obtain up-to-date country specific travel and safety advice, you will need to visit the Foreign & Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

For up-to-date country specific health information and advice, including recommended travel vaccinations visit the NHS website:

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations> and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>

We recommend Party Leaders and their students individually consult their GP to take into account any relevant personal health factors in relation to their trip and plan ahead well in advance (at least 6 weeks' prior to trip) in the case of required vaccinations or tablets.



Fit to Fly?

If any member of your group is ill or may be infectious with any virus prior to departure, please ensure the sufferer seeks advice to assess whether they are fit to fly. Checks including those for Covid 19 may be carried out at airports as part of their prevention of infection measures.

It is highly advisable to consult with your travel insurer as to their policy and the documentation required for a claim in the event any student is unfit to fly.



Supervision of Students

The supervision of students remains the responsibility of a Party Leader at all times unless formal supervisory arrangements are made (i.e. under ski instruction). We therefore respectfully ask that our people are not asked to undertake supervisory duties and no issue is made when they politely decline any such request. It is the responsibility of a Party Leader to undertake regular roll calls to check that all students can be accounted for at all times.

For the benefit of, and in fairness to other guests at premises, please ensure that students are sufficiently well supervised to ensure their good behaviour within the building and grounds during their stay. Groups that conduct themselves well are appreciated and remembered by a hotelier. Good general conduct will also be appreciated by those sharing transport with or making visits to the same attractions as a group.

A Party Leader must also adhere to our booking Terms & Conditions in relation to the Group's behaviour, which are set out in section 19 including the respect for and adherence to local standards in relation to alcohol consumption which may differ to those in the UK.



Transport Safety

Coach Transfers

The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) recommend that adults should not all sit together in a group or just one area of the coach, but instead spread themselves out amongst the students to ensure supervision through all areas of the vehicle at all times, including on the upper floor of a double-decker. They also recommend consideration to whether it is prudent to monitor drivers during any overnight coach travel, particularly if it involves long tedious motorway sections.

Seat or lap belts will be present for all passengers on UK and European operated coaches, which should be worn at all times. It is for supervisory adults to check that seat belts are worn where appropriate and to the coach driver for assistance where required. Please be aware however that whilst we preferentially source coaches with seat belts, in some countries outside Europe such as North America, it is frequently not a legal requirement. It is recommended that the responsible supervising adult on the transfer check the situation prior to disembarking a group from a coach; the direction of traffic may be on a different side of the road than is usual and smaller accommodation premises may not have designated bays set back from the road.

Transport Terminals and Crossings

Transport terminals can be busy and chaotic places; in conjunction with group supervisory adults, a Party Leader should seek to keep a group together at all times. If small groups are permitted to separate from the main group, a meeting point should be designated and made known to the whole group.

On boarding any mode of transport, do not regroup at the top of stairways or in front of doorway entrances / exits but instead gather the group to one side. Once on board any mode of transport, a Party Leader should ensure that the group quietens and listens to the safety announcements that will be made at the start of a journey or crossing.

A Party Leader should also give instructions to the group concerning behaviour during the crossing, such as no running, no shouting and respect for other passengers at all times.

Operators also welcome an easily identifiable group, such as all members wearing the same brightly coloured school sweatshirt, cap or sash, which will equally aid a Party Leader with group management.

On boarding a ferry it may be advisable to locate Reception and instruct the group that if any members become separated / lost, to approach Reception and ask for a tannoy call to be made to reunite the group. Equally, make use of established meeting points designated on board a ferry, such as the Fire Assembly / Muster Points, which have large numbered boards displayed to mark their location.

Our ferry providers often have guidance they can provide in advance of your trip so please do not hesitate to ask for this if it would be helpful.



Fire Safety Essentials

Be prepared

Be aware that fire safety standards and provisions can be very different in overseas countries to that in the UK.

We only make use of premises that have good fire safety prevention measures and procedures in place and as a minimum, meet the national fire safety standards of their country.

Very often the hotelier will provide your group with an emergency fire evacuation talk in English. Alternatively you can seek their guidance and provide your group with the required information to ensure they all know the following:

- What the fire alarm sounds like
- The location of the evacuation route closest to the group bedrooms and familiarity with the route, including routes once outside of the building
- The location of any alternative evacuation routes and familiarity with the route(s)
- The location of the Assembly Point
- Where to keep any room keys (keys or cards) in the door lock ready for use (exit) at any time
- How to open bedroom windows

We strongly recommend that the Party Leader(s) has an accurate and current record of the rooms occupied by the group and the room occupiers, to assist in the event of a Roll Call. Members of the group should not be permitted to change rooms without informing the Party Leader. A Party Leader should also consider in advance or during their stay (in event of injury) how any member of the group with mobility issues would evacuate from the premises in the event of an alarm (lifts should not be used) and liaise with the hotel manager to determine if they can provide assistance or not.

On discovering a fire/ hearing alarm

- Do not attempt to fight the fire
- Ask your group to leave the building quickly and calmly.
- Alert others to the fire if appropriate.
- Make use of the emergency evacuation routes – signs should be available to help alert you.
- Do not make use of any lifts

Once at the Assembly Point

- Follow instructions from the person who identifies themselves as in charge of the evacuation or emergency services.
- Report to the person in charge that either all members of the group are accounted for or if any group members are missing and the room(s) they occupied.
- All of the group should remain at the Assembly Point until the person in charge advises you that it is safe to return into the building.



Water Safety

Swimming Pools and other Water Immersion Activities

Where swimming pools are present at an accommodation premises, we prefer to make use of those that also have a lifeguard. But it is not a worldwide legal requirement and in many small premises this is often not the case. We always seek to establish whether or not a lifeguard is normally in situ and/or if this service can be offered at a supplementary cost and will normally give you this information on request.

But it should never be relied upon that a lifeguard will be present during your stay and therefore this should be checked again prior to use. If a group intends to make use of a swimming pool, or undertake any water immersion activities, it is recommended that a supervisory adult within the group holds a current lifesaving qualification, so that student water immersion activities can be overseen by a suitably qualified person at all times.

A Party Leader should seek to ensure the following:

- Adherence to pool opening times.
- Observation of pool signage.
- To not allow members of the group to swim if suffering from a gastrointestinal upset and for at least 48hrs afterwards.
- To not allow members of the group to swim straight after a meal.
- To prohibit running and horseplay around the poolside.
- Only allow diving where it is clearly permitted and never in water less than 1.5m deep.
- To not permit diving from any object around the pool other than purpose designed dive boards.

Please refer to your Local Education Authority or governing body guidance covering activities that involve water immersion.



To participate in many Watersport activities, a student should be able to competently swim 50m in deep water and a Party Leader should establish that this is the case.

Please note: In France swimming caps and speedo type swimming trunks must be worn in swimming pools, on health and hygiene grounds. Short type trunks (that could be worn as everyday external clothing) are not permitted.



Prevention of the Spread of Infection

Covid 19/ Coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that cause diseases in animals and humans. In humans, the viruses can cause mild respiratory infections, like the common cold, but can lead to serious illnesses, like pneumonia. COVID-19 is the name given to a new coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019.

At the time of updating this guidance (Oct 2020), the Covid 19 pandemic is still ongoing and lockdown restrictions are at different stages across the world. We recommend that you follow the latest up to date guidance for the destination you are travelling to in addition to FDCO advice.

ABTA's Post Pandemic Recovery Guide is a good starting point <https://www.abta.com/industry-zone/abta-shop/post-pandemic-recovery-guide> and your Account Manager or Group Coordinator will be happy to discuss or provide further guidance of the best source of information for your destination.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (a normal cough may be worse than usual)
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with COVID-19 have at least 1 of these symptoms. The evidence that we have so far is that younger people are less likely to be severely ill and may present with less symptoms or be completely asymptomatic, that is be a carrier of Covid 19 without any of the symptoms. What is clear is that in some people, it can lead to serious respiratory difficulties, as well as affecting other areas of the body.

COVID-19 can be transmitted by being in close contact with an infected person, and by respiratory droplets spread through coughing and sneezing, just like the common cold.

Those experiencing symptoms of, or who have tested positive for, COVID-19 are asked to self-isolate (i.e. quarantine themselves) for at least 7 days, and members of their family or household, for at least 14 days to avoid further spreading the infection. In the event that a student is unwell with Covid 19 or suspected Covid 19, they should not travel and should follow the latest government guidance making a claim made under their travel insurance.

Until further notice, specific Prevention of the Spread of Infection procedures are in place. Typically, these procedures may include but are not limited to:

- Personal hygiene measures
- Sanitisation measures
- Cleaning & disinfection measures
- PPE (personal protective equipment) measures
- Limited capacity/ attendee measures at public gatherings and in enclosed spaces
- Health check measures/ procedures
- Social distancing measures



Norovirus

Norovirus is an extremely common virus which causes gastroenteritis (an inflammation of the stomach and intestines).

It is highly contagious; people who contract it will remain infectious for some time after symptoms have cleared (up to 48 hours after) and due to the nature of the virus (it can survive on surfaces for long periods of time) and the illness (projectile vomiting and diarrhoea) can be easily spread as a result of poor hygiene. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, with possibly also headache (through dehydration), mild fever and abdominal cramps. It is also known as the '24 hour stomach bug' as symptoms usually only last between 1 and 3 days.

Antibiotics (that kill bacteria) are ineffective against a virus. A doctor may prescribe medication to reduce severe vomiting or diarrhoea, but the best and most appropriate way to treat Norovirus is rest, drinking lots of water-based fluids and room confinement during the period of illness and for 48 hours after symptoms have cleared.

Stomach Upsets

Digestive upsets can be common on any trip overseas and in particular, on long-haul tours. Often (even where food and water is considered in generally safe to consume) this can simply be a response by the body to a change in climatic conditions, a change in food and water or dehydration. A good source of guidance is the NaTHNaC information sheet 'Food and Water Hygiene': <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

The effects of dehydration are often underestimated. It is actually a common cause of illness in hot climates, but nausea and vomiting (plus headaches, cramps and fatigue) are often attributed to the consumption of bad food or water or an illness.

We highly recommend Party Leaders constantly prompt a group to drink water throughout the day as they are likely to be highly active. It's

vital therefore that a personal drinking bottle that can be refilled is accessible at all times during their trip



Medical Conditions and Allergies

First Aid Treatment

Although they may be first aid trained, our people are not responsible for providing First Aid treatment to your group.

Group supervisory adults should therefore have access to a First Aid kit (remember to remove sharp implements from hand luggage when flying) and one or more of your party should be First Aid qualified.

Access to First Aid arrangements remains the responsibility of a Party Leader at all times.

Ski resorts will normally have a 24/7 Medical Centre with on-call doctors and the mountain operator will have emergency Mountain Rescue medical arrangements in place. Ski Instructors will have also usually received basic Emergency First Response training as part of their professional sporting qualification.

Medical Conditions requiring Medication

If a member of the group is prone to travel related illness or has a health condition(s) that requires medication, please ensure that they take sufficient stocks with them to last the entire trip duration (plus a little extra to cover unforeseen return delays) as some brands or even some medicines may not be available locally. Keep medication in its original packaging and travel with the associated prescription documents to prove the source of and be aware that UK medication may be illegal elsewhere, in which case a doctor's letter will be required. You can check the legality of the medication with the Embassy relative to the transit and destination countries; visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations>

Special Dietary Requirements – Intolerances/Allergies

Please advise us of any special dietary requirements, ideally at the time of booking so that we can do our best to help. Whilst, we will forward this information on to our / relevant suppliers, or make an appropriate booking, such as a suitable plane meal where these are provided (long haul flights); a Party Leader must please take account that we do not have control over food present in the environment of a public train, plane, ferry etc.

Party Leaders will also need to ensure that they re-confirm and discuss any dietary needs of the group with a hotelier on arrival. We ask that the medical need and severity is made very clear, especially in the case of a food allergy that could result in anaphylactic shock.

In our experience whilst it has undoubtedly improved, some overseas hotels do not have a good understanding of special dietary requirements and so it may be advisable in some cases to travel with stocks of special food items to substitute or supplement the meals provided. Please note that; no refund can be offered for a lack of suitable food provision for those travelling with special dietary requirements.

Please note that there may also be a general lack of understanding regarding vegetarian/vegan diets in certain countries and therefore they may not be of a high standard. In this instance, please appreciate that this may simply be because of a lack of understanding and therefore alternative meal suggestions to hotel staff may help resolve the matter.



Other Important Safety Considerations

Lifts

It is a common requirement (indicated by signage) that children should be accompanied by adults in lifts, so that overloading and abuse of the lift does not take place.

In some overseas countries it is still occasionally acceptable to have lifts without internal doors/exposed walls. In these types of lift, passengers must stand back from the exposed walls to prevent injury. Party Leaders should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the type of lift and lift instructions at their accommodation premises to instruct their group accordingly.

Flooring (Slip/Trip Hazards)

Many overseas premises do not have carpeted floorings so that they can be easily cleaned and in many summer resorts, stone and marble flooring is common for a cooling effect. In these instances, surfaces can be very slippery, even more so when wet. A hotel should display temporary warning signage when a temporary slip hazard exists. They should also make use of grills or matting in ski fit rooms or grip decking around pool areas etc. However, it is still worth being mindful of the risk some flooring can pose and bring it to the attention of the group.

Gas Safety

From time to time we use accommodation where there are gas supplied facilities and/or gas fireplaces in a property (i.e. frequently lobby/reception areas). They are normally sealed units where the flue is external (usually through the roof or well away from any openings). We request information about gas used as part of our standard audit accommodation process and will flag any particular unusual risks and/or instructions as necessary. In the unlikely event that you have any safety concerns in this area we would ask that you raise this with us at the earliest opportunity.

Electrics

Please be aware that it is standard practice to have sockets in bathrooms. Where this is the case, we recommend a Party Leader instruct that these are not used.

If a group has any concerns about the electrics in the premises, such as exposed wiring, stained (burnt) or loose plug sockets, electric shocks from switches or appliances, they immediately report them to hotel management

Sunshine

Whilst welcome, sunshine can be harmful both in the short and long term if simple protective steps are not taken; Party Leaders should ensure that group members are covering skin with light clothing or making use of UV protective sun cream that is regularly reapplied to exposed skin.

Eyes too need protection from sunshine by way of UV protective sunglasses, particularly in reflective water and snow environments. Otherwise short term painful conditions such as sunburn and 'sun/snow blindness' can result, as well as associated headaches and dehydration.



Snow Sports Health and Safety Information

'Get Fit for Ski' information and advice, can be found on our website:

<https://www.schoolski.co.uk/getskifit>



Ski Helmets and Body Protection

We recommend that everyone taking part in ski and snowboard activities wear a protective helmet to prevent serious head injuries. In Italy it is compulsory for children age 13 and under to wear a helmet and in Austria, compulsory for children age 15 and under. We will therefore automatically include ski helmet hire in the trip we organise for you.

A Party Leader can request that helmet hire is not included in the package, but we strongly recommend against this, unless the Party Leader is satisfied that the group has access to helmets via other avenues (group has their own).

We would however like to highlight that wearing a helmet does not mean that no head injury can / will be sustained. The best way to protect against a ski or snowboard head injury is to ski or board within the limits of your ability and, to follow the rules given by instructors.

The Snowsport Course Organisers Award (SCO)

The SCO Award is recognised as a ski trip supervisory pre-requisite qualification for Party Leaders by most English and Welsh Local Education Authorities, but we believe every Party Leader will benefit from this one day course; it will give an introduction to the skills that are necessary to organise ski trips for groups, providing information on safety, responsibility and how to achieve the maximum educational value for your group. We run our own SCO courses in conjunction with Snowsport England so please get in touch with us if you are interested in attending.



Winter Sports Guidance and Code of Conduct

The International Ski Federation has 10 Rules into a Code of Conduct, which should be observed by all skiers and snowboarders on the piste at all times. A Party Leader should ensure that all members of a group are aware of the Code and behave accordingly: <https://www.skiclub.co.uk/info-and-advice/before-you-go/on-piste-sa>

We also highly recommend you and your students familiarise yourself with the safety guidance given by ABTA: <https://www.abta.com/tips-and-advice/staying-safe-on-holiday/winter-sports>



Out of Hours and/or Emergency Support

The Party Leader should familiarise themselves with their accommodation out-of- hours procedures, for example, if your group returns late to the premises, can you/how will you enter? If a member of the group has a problem during the night that does not require emergency services, is a hotel member of staff available 24/7 to assist you and how do you make contact with them or where would you find them?

Some hotels provide Reception cover throughout the night, others will have a Night Porter or Security Guard, or in smaller premises it may be a case of waking up a Hotel Manager living at the premises.

In the event of an emergency, your first action should be to seek the assistance of local emergency services, so a Party Leader should ensure that these telephone numbers are known to them or on-hand. Also, we highly recommend that you have the phone numbers for the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate phone numbers relative to the transit and destination countries; visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations> for details. The Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) booklet 'Support for British nationals abroad: A guide' advises who and how they can help.

We will provide you with a telephone number for use at any time 24/7hrs to offer emergency advice and assistance to the group (where we reasonably practically can). Please note this emergency number should never be given to parents, otherwise this service could be overwhelmed and unable to perform its intended emergency function effectively.





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