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# Party Leader Handbook

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*Essential Travel Information for your Equity trip*

Equity



## Welcome to the start of your tour

We strongly recommend that you read this booklet before you leave, and carry it with you during your outward and homeward journeys. It contains important information that is designed to prepare you for and to help make the most of your trip.

## In Case of Emergency

### 1. Your Emergency Contact Details

Please ensure that we are in possession of the following telephone contacts before your departure from the UK:

(a) The coach company which is transferring you to your UK airport (if you are making your own arrangements).

(b) Two responsible contacts in the UK i.e. the Head Teacher, who can be contacted 24 hours whilst your party is away in case of an emergency. These contacts should also have a passenger names list with contact telephone numbers of all parents of students participating in the tour.

### 2. Emergency Contact Numbers

Emergency numbers are provided in your final travel pack and with your itinerary.

Our normal office hours are 09:00 – 17:15 Monday to Friday.

Under no circumstances is the out of hours emergency telephone number to be given to parents or any other third party; excessive calls to this line could jeopardize the safety of our tours.

### 3. Emergency procedure

In the event of a serious illness or accident involving hospitalisation during your trip, you should immediately contact your insurance company. Please also notify your Product Delivery Specialist within office hours or our Duty Office out of hours on the numbers noted on your itinerary.

The insurance company will require the following information:

- Your policy reference number
- A contact telephone number
- Location of the hospital and the treating doctor's telephone number
- Name, address, usual GP and age of patient
- Details of the booked travel arrangements
- The medical problem



## Emergencies and Insurance

Following your call, the medical assistance company will undertake the following:

- Contact treating doctor/medical centre for details of illness/injury.
- Guarantee hospital/medical costs where necessary.
- Establish the necessity for repatriation. This will be on the recommendation of the treating doctor, not the patient or their family.
- Arrange repatriation as specified by the doctor, the Medical Assistance Company will arrange ambulances/flights/nurses etc, as necessary.
- Where repatriation has been organised, the group leader will be contacted by The Medical Assistance Company for them to pass on relevant details.
- The Medical Assistance may require the contact details of the next of kin.

Please remember that it is the duty of a supervisory adult within your party to stay with a sick or injured child who may have to remain in hospital after the group has departed.

## Insurance

Injury or illness is something that we all dread and it can be especially disconcerting to suffer abroad, as medical treatment generally has to be paid for. It is imperative, and a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance cover before travel.

At the time of booking, we will have offered you our nominated insurance policy; if you chose not to take this but would now like to add the cover on, please contact us immediately for a quotation.

Please ensure that you read your policy in full and that you carry copies of it to resort with

\*If articles are lost or stolen whilst in care of airline, a claim must be made direct with the carrier or handling agent at the airport on landing. You will need to complete a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) form at the airport. Please ensure that you do not leave the airport before completing this form and handing it to an official responsible for baggage claims.

you for your use and reference. These can be found on our website.

## Useful notes if you need to make an insurance claim:

- Keep receipts and appropriate documentation, such as doctor's fees and prescription charges, because claims cannot be made without them.
- Police reports must be obtained to claim for lost or stolen property. Local police should be contacted quickly to obtain a statement and ensure that investigation is started whilst you are still in the country\*
- Notify the insurance company as soon as possible; the contact details can be found on your policy document.
- You must notify the insurance company of a claim no later than 31 days after your return. You will be asked to send your confirmation booking invoice from us along with a claim form, all of which can be submitted online. We cannot accept any responsibility for any claims after 31 days, or claims lost in transit. Regrettably we cannot make claims on your behalf; they must be submitted by the Party Leader.

## Insurance on Music Tours

Please note that musical instruments are not insured under our nominated insurance policy. Please obtain separate cover for these items.

## Useful contacts

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)



# Medical Notes

## 1. Special Requirements

We want everyone to enjoy a completely successful trip, which is why at the time of booking, we should have been notified of any medical conditions which may need special attention. We need to know well in advance, so that the relevant suppliers can be notified in good time and any necessary preparations made. You should also re-confirm any details to suppliers of each element of your trip such as your hotelier, instructor/guide(s) or transport providers.

The information you provide will be treated confidentially and will only be used to check that the transport, accommodation and facilities in the destination are right for you. It all helps to ensure you receive a quality service tailored to your particular needs.

## 2. Medical conditions/ change in health after booking

Please read the disclosure of material facts and pre-existing health conditions section of your insurance policy. Any change in medical condition, regardless of age, may need to be declared at the time of the incident; if this later results in cancellation and the change in health was not reported to the Insurer at the time, the Insurer may not award the claim.

## 3. European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

For trips to EEA countries, each group member should obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). An application form for the EHIC can be completed online from the following link: [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers).

If your group members have previously obtained an EHIC, please ask them to check the expiry date. The EHIC card entitles the holder to medical attention in state run hospitals only.

For ski groups, please keep in ski jacket pocket all week and Party leaders should keep photocopies.

## 4. North America: "Consent to emergency medical care" forms

It is a requirement that all medical centres and hospitals in North America obtain written consent from a parent or guardian prior to treating a minor. Therefore many resorts require our groups to bring their own "loco parentis" or "consent to emergency care" forms with them, completed and signed by each parent on behalf of their children. Please enquire with your LEA for details. Some resorts produce their own forms and we will supply you with these 6 weeks prior to your scheduled departure with your ski hire declaration forms.





## Passport and Visas

It is the Party Leader's responsibility that all group members have the correct documentation to travel, both passport and visa. If you or any member of your party is not a British citizen or holds a non-British passport, you must check passport and visa requirements with the British Council, Embassy or Consulate of the country(ies) to or through which you are intending to travel.

All members of your party must hold a valid passport. Some countries require a passport to remain valid for a period after the date of entry to that country (typically 3 months). You are advised to check the requirements of the destination at time of booking.

We recommend that you take photocopies of all passports with you as well as leaving a copy with your emergency contacts in the UK.

We cannot accept responsibility for any cost or fines incurred due to non-compliance with the above nor can we accept any liability if you are refused entry into any country due to failure on your part to carry the correct documentation.

### Collective passports

A collective passport can be used for the majority of EU countries (with the exception of Andorra). An application form can be obtained from the Passport Office or on-line at [www.direct.gov.uk/passports](http://www.direct.gov.uk/passports). The collective passport should be completed at least 12 weeks prior to departure. Please be aware that there is a cost for the collective passport and it is not included in the trip price.

Should you use a collective passport, we recommend that you carry several copies; in the event that any member of your party has to travel back separately from your group, they would need a copy signed by a professional (doctor, solicitor, British Consulate.)

Additionally, it is worth listing the return date as one day later than scheduled in case of any unforeseeable delay.

A collective passport would become invalid if the group leader were unable to travel, for example, due to illness and a Deputy Leader had not been appointed and named on the collective passport.

Collective passports issued by the British Passport Agency are not valid for travel to the United States or Canada and individual passports will be required for each member of your party. It is also advisable to carry a supply of pens and to give everyone details of the accommodation and dates of the trip, in order to fill in the landing cards on the flight.

### Visa waiver (USA only)

Currently a charge of \$14 applies for the ESTA application. Entrance into the country will not be permitted for GBR citizens without an ESTA.

All qualified Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travellers are required to obtain electronic travel authorization prior to departure to the United States. If any passenger is an eligible national of the VWP and as such do not require a visa to enter the USA, they will need to submit an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) application no less than 72 hours prior to departure.

Travel Authorization is obtained through an online registration system at

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>.

Please refer to the website for eligible countries. Please check specific visa requirements with your embassy if you are not eligible. It is advisable for a copy of the acceptance for the ESTA from each passenger to be retained by the Party Leader prior to travel.

### Useful contacts

For all up to date passport information, we recommend:

[www.direct.gov.uk/passports](http://www.direct.gov.uk/passports)

Contact the Passport Service: 0300 222 0000

If any of your group are non-EU nationals, it is worth visiting

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)



## Your Journey

### Unforeseen circumstances & delays

Although we, as your tour operator, aim to ensure that your trip runs as smoothly as possible, there are certain events which are beyond our control. They may be due, but not limited to; weather, industrial action or air traffic control but we would like to reassure you that, behind the scenes, our Brighton Operations Department, our overseas management team, airline staff and coach companies will be working together to get things back on track as quickly as possible.

In the unlikely event of a problem we would urge you to follow the instructions below:

- Please inform us of the situation immediately
- Please stay calm and patient – we will keep you informed
- Please stay where you are and keep your pupils within range to enable an efficient move at the earliest opportunity.

May we also bring to your attention that most reservations made by us are booked and paid for in advance. Service suppliers will not always give refunds in the event of a party arriving late in the resort due to weather/sailing delays and thereby missing part of a pre-booked service. This applies to items such as meals, ski hire, ski school, lift passes, etc.

### Travel Groups

We advise that you split into dedicated smaller travel groups with 1 teacher allocated to a group of approximately 10 students for the duration of the trip. This makes it easier to ensure that everyone is accounted for at all times. It is also essential for airports and immigration checks so as to make sure that one member of staff is at the back of the group in case there are any issues.

### Coach Trips

#### 1. Facilities

If your coach is fitted with a DVD player, we recommend that you bring your own DVDs.

If your vehicle is fitted with a drinks dispenser, it is standard practice for the driver to charge for drinks. Please note that the toilet on board is for emergency use only. This does not mean it cannot be used but it must not be a substitute for normal comfort stops.

Please remind your group members to be responsible for any litter they may produce such as cans and rubbish from packed lunches. Pupils may be advised to bring a travel pillow for added comfort.

It is also suggested that groups create a seating plan for the coach and plan for staff to be placed throughout the coach for supervision purposes.

#### 2. Your travel times

The travel timings that we indicate on your itinerary act merely as a guideline and have been estimated assuming normal and reasonable road conditions. These may be subject to variation should you encounter slow traffic or poor weather conditions.

We would stress that the following routes are at the discretion of the coach companies. Travel to the Austrian Alps could incorporate travel through France, Germany, Switzerland or Luxembourg. Travel to Italy could include travel through France, Germany and Switzerland.

Drivers will require regular stops, particularly those driving to Austria and Italy.





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## Your Journey *continued*

### 2. Your travel times *Continued*

Stops at service stations will be scheduled en route in accordance with driver rest periods and students can have meals/refreshments (not included in the tour price); please ensure that pupils take suitable amounts of local currency and GB Pounds for these stops.

### 3. Baggage allowance

Luggage space is limited and we therefore request that group members take only one soft holdall type bag; this bag cannot be accessed until you arrive at your hotel therefore please consider what essential items you may need to keep with you in a small hand luggage bag. Please bear in mind that if your party has a number of skis or snowboards to transport, a trailer may be required; please enquire about costs if this is applicable to your group.

### 4. Drivers' hours

Coach drivers must operate strictly according to EU Regulations governing their working hours. Such regulations are in the interests of everyone's safety and are strictly enforced.

### Ski Trips

Taking these enforcements into consideration, your coach will not be available during the afternoon on the day of arrival in resort nor on the day of departure from your resort, due to both drivers being out of permitted driving hours. Special arrangements will therefore be made in most cases to transfer you from the ski slopes back to the hotel on the afternoon of your last day's skiing using the resort ski bus service and in certain cases local coaches.

Throughout the week, your coach is normally available for daily transfers where necessary to ski areas (except for certain small groups who are sharing a coach from the UK and who will need to use the local resort ski bus). It may also be available for short evening transfers to entertainments (e.g. ice skating, discos) and

drivers should be given suitable notice of your plans.

### 5. Channel crossing

Your driver will be familiar with procedures at the port of embarkation. Ferry companies and ports have different times for check in: most will recommend that you are through passport control and ready to check in at least one hour before sailing and in peak periods (February half term) 2 hours before however, each operator is different and you should confirm this with your Product Delivery Specialist.

Due to demand for peak crossings, your first choice of crossing may not always be available, despite us having requested it well in advance. In such cases, we will endeavour to secure the nearest alternative crossing available. We will inform you of the provisional departure and channel crossing times as soon as possible, but please note that these are subject to final confirmation from the channel crossing operator.

### 6. Requested Coach Companies

We cannot guarantee to provide specially requested coach companies. When this is possible a supplement may apply.

### 7. Coach Breakdowns

In the event of the breakdown of your vehicle your driver will contact his company in the UK for instruction. Where a repair can be actioned quickly, a replacement vehicle will not be provided. If there is to be a prolonged delay a replacement coach will be subcontracted to carry out your itinerary. Please advise us of your situation via our office number or our emergency contact number (outside office hours) so we can monitor the delay and assist where necessary.





#### 8. Parties sharing a coach

If you are leading a small party and sharing a coach with another group we would remind you of the following, which is subject to the geographical location of the group with which you are combining:

- a) A diversion within the UK to collect the other group may be necessary and will add to the journey time.
- b) If you are not travelling to the same resort as the group with which you are sharing, your coach may not necessarily remain with you in the resort and transfers to and from the

ski slopes, if necessary, will be by local ski bus service.

We would ask all groups sharing coaches to show courtesy and consideration to the other groups at all times.



## Air Tours

Most flights will be 'ticketless' therefore you must present your flight reference(s) shown on your itinerary together with your passport at the check-in desk.

### 1. Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS)

A number of countries have introduced legislation, stipulating that full passport details must be provided in advance for all passengers travelling by air. This legislation is applicable for most long-haul destinations and many European countries, including the UK. Please therefore ensure that these details are provided for every passenger travelling by air, in addition to the other requested information. For ski bookings this information can be entered on to your booking, via your teacher portal, the login details for which will be provided upon quotation.

### 2. Check-in

Security measures remain thorough. Airline staff need ample time for the necessary checks therefore we recommend that you check-in at your departure airport 3 hours prior to the scheduled time of departure. We are unable to accept responsibility for any additional costs should your party members miss the flight because of their late arrival.

If your transfer is delayed or you have any problems at the airport, please contact our Airport Duty Manager (Complete Travel Connections) on 07766 727 684.

We do our best to request pre-assigned group seats for each party, however this cannot be guaranteed.

### 3. Baggage allowance and restrictions

Baggage allowance varies across flight providers, please check with your Product Delivery Specialist and the flight provider's website for accurate allowance information.

If you exceed this amount, the airline will charge you extra for each additional kilo (prices vary).

All members of the party should be asked to carry necessities only as hand luggage is restricted. Please note that sharp objects and liquids exceeding 100mls, will be confiscated if found in hand luggage, and may delay the departure of the aircraft. If you need to carry syringes or epi pens then please ensure you have a supporting letter from your doctor and declare these items at your check in.

We advise you to check the website of your airline for the restrictions closer to your departure date as this information is subject to change.

### 4. Carriage of personal skis/boards

Charges will apply and vary considerably depending on the airline. Some airlines will not accept pre-booking of ski carriage. Please enquire for details applicable to your airline.

Please note that ski/snowboard boots are generally not included in the 'ski carriage' but should be contained within your standard luggage allowance.

### 5. In-flight catering

In line with an increasing number of airlines, short haul flights will generally not provide complimentary in-flight catering. Drinks and snacks may be purchased on board if required.





## **6. Coach transfers from school**

We can arrange a return coach transfer to your UK departure airport. If you would like this service and this has not been included in your tour already, please ask for a quotation.

## **7. Arrival at your overseas airport**

In our brochure we give the estimated transfer time from airport to resort but please bear in mind that traffic and adverse weather conditions can affect the speed of your transfer. Please show understanding if your coach does not leave the overseas airport once your group has boarded; the resort transfer coach may be held for passengers on a later flight who are travelling to the same resort and we are obliged to keep our transfers as full as possible.

At larger North American airports, coaches are not always allowed to wait at the terminal building so once the group has arrived, our Equity representative will call the coach and arrange for them to pick you up. It can take 10-20 minutes for the coach to make its way to the terminal building and load, so this is a good opportunity for your party to use toilets, exchange money, etc.

It is not always possible to drop you right outside your hotel therefore appropriate footwear should be considered and your party should be prepared to carry their luggage into the hotel. Please note that European or American coaches may not be fully equipped with seat belts, as this is not a legal requirement.



# Accommodation

## 1. Rooming

Your rooming arrangements will vary depending on the age of your group and your chosen destination so please refer to your travel documentation for the rooming arrangements of your group.

Generally, pupils will be accommodated in multi bedded rooms (3-8) unless we are otherwise advised and accompanying staff in twin or triple rooms. Single rooms (strictly subject to availability) carry a minimum supplement. Please be aware of the following points that may apply to your group:

- Certain hotels still have rooms with double beds but the majority of our groups are accommodated in single beds.
- On the continent, “continental twins” are frequently used. This is a double bed base frame with two mattresses – individual bed linen and duvets are used.
- In the rare event where hotels can only offer twin rooms, it may mean that a student will have sole occupancy of a room depending on your numbers and gender split. If this presents itself as an issue for your group, please advise your Product Delivery Specialist at the earliest opportunity.
- Typical rooms in North America have either two double/queen size beds or one double/queen bed and a double sofa bed. Each room is based on four students (bed-sharing) or two adults (non-bed-sharing) unless otherwise stated. Supplements are charged for all under occupied rooms (student triple, twin or single and adult singles) this includes rooms for students, free and paid adult places. Some hotels may allow a rollaway bed for a 5th/3rd occupant. We will do all we can to keep the costs down for you and accommodate your group safely, but please note that Equity are unable to waive any room supplements that are applied by the hotel and therefore careful

consideration should be taken when organising your rooming.

- We require a room list to be completed a minimum of 16 weeks prior to departure; the hotel must receive this in order to block your final rooms off in their reservation system. It is advisable to complete this as early as possible to ensure your rooms are close together, depending on the property size and layout. It is in the best interest of the hotel to spread teacher rooms throughout the group in order to enable you to supervise your students; they will also aim to split genders where possible.
- Where your tour includes travel on an overnight train in sleeping berths, please be aware that sole occupancy of the berths will incur a supplement if all beds are not required.
- Party Leaders travelling with members of their family must share a family room.
- Cots are not always readily available therefore many Party Leaders provide their own travel cots if required. We are happy to try to source a cot, however these may carry a supplement.

## 2. Room servicing

Rooms are serviced on a regular basis in hotels but individuals are expected to keep rooms tidy. In certain Austrian and French accommodation, individuals are additionally expected to make their own beds when staying in apartments, youth hostels and centres.





## Accommodation *continued*

### 3. Check-in and vacation of rooms

On your day of departure, you may be required to vacate your rooms in the morning even if you are not scheduled to leave until much later that day. If your group is not departing until the evening, a supplement may apply). Rooms should be left clean and tidy and in certain accommodation students are expected to strip beds.

#### Ski Trips

In resorts which are a short transfer from your arrival airport, it is not practically possible to service and clean all rooms prior to the arrival of groups and therefore check-in time is usually not before 16:00 hours. It is naturally in the interest of everyone to provide clean accommodation from the outset and we would ask for your understanding in this matter.

On your day of departure, rooms usually must be vacated by 09:00 hours to allow staff time to prepare and clean rooms for the next arrivals. For European coach groups, rooms must also be vacated by 09:00 on the day of departure i.e. before skiing. We will endeavour to provide washing facilities for your use prior to departure but in most cases these are limited and cannot be guaranteed. Luggage will be stored within the hotel/ apartments or on the coach.

### 4. Meal arrangements

If we have made your meal arrangements with your hotel and you have specific requests, please advise us. Some hotels will try to provide food that we are used to in order to prevent food wastage where others will try to offer dishes that are typical of the country without being too elaborate or sophisticated. Students should be aware of this and we hope they will enjoy the food prepared by our hoteliers.

Full board is usually based on a packed lunch.

Hot lunches if requested will normally carry a supplementary charge. Drinks with meals other than breakfast are not included. Whilst many hotels will provide water on the table

this cannot be guaranteed. Some hotels will expect clients to purchase soft drinks and mineral water at meal times. Please do not consume drinks in the hotel which have been purchased from outside your accommodation.

**Dietary Requirements:** We will advise relevant suppliers of your requirements and allergies. It is the responsibility of the Party Leader and accompanying staff to ensure that the provision is correctly fulfilled. You must re-confirm and discuss these requests with your hotelier on arrival.

In our experience, foreign hoteliers do not always understand special dietary requirements, so it may be advisable in exceptional cases to take certain food items with you. Please advise us of specific requirements as early as possible so that we can explain your needs to the hotel. No refund can be offered for a lack of suitable food provision for those travelling with special dietary requirements. If dietary alternatives are not satisfactory, please make suitable suggestions to the hotel/centre.

Please note that strict Kosher diets cannot be catered for. For gluten free diets please check with your Product Delivery Specialist as it may be necessary to take your own ingredients such as pasta, bread etc. for the hotel to prepare.

#### Ski Trips

European trips are on a full board basis including breakfast, hot or packed lunch and evening meal. North American Trips are on a half board basis including breakfast and evening meal unless lunch vouchers have been purchased.

Depending on your arrival and departure times, the first and last meals included in your package will vary. Your first meal could be a hot or cold buffet or a box/packed dinner, which can then be taken to your rooms.





## 5. Towels & soap

Please note that these are not supplied in all hotels, particularly across Europe and all students in your party should take a reasonable sized towel. Party Leaders and additional adults will have a towel provided. A spare towel is useful if a swimming evening is planned. In North America, towels are always provided.

## 6. Damages and breakages

In line with an increasing number of hotels, our hoteliers are requesting payment of a damage deposit on arrival for all of our groups. We recommend that all of your allocated rooms are checked on arrival and that any pre-existing damage is reported immediately to the hotel manager or our Equity representative.

In North America it is standard procedure for the Hotel to take a credit check-in from the Party Leader. A further check must then

be completed prior to your departure and, assuming all is in order, your deposit will be refunded to you. Please be aware that the cost of any damage caused to the property will be the responsibility of the Party Leader.

Depending on your hotel, this will either be added to your invoice or payable in resort; your Product Delivery Specialist will advise you how this is to be paid prior to your departure. If you are due to be refunded on return to the UK, please ensure that you obtain a signature from your Equity representative on the receipt issued with your travel documents.



# In Resort

## 1. Valuables and money matters

We recommend that you do not take items of value such as jewellery and expensive cameras.

We strongly advise Party Leaders and students take a reasonable amount of local currency for use on the first few days of their holiday. We also strongly recommend that the group make use of the hotel safe for money and passports. In some destinations, banks are not open on a regular basis and the use of prepaid cards or exchange of Travellers Cheques can sometimes prove difficult. If travelling by coach, ensure you take the currency of any countries in which stops may be made.

We suggest a reasonable float should be taken by all Party Leaders and that you have access to a credit or debit card with emergency funds to cover any medical expenses or the purchase of small items such as medicine, taxi fares, etc. Keep the receipts in the event that you need to provide these to the insurance company if you are making a claim.

It is highly advisable that students' cash is managed and kept securely at all times. Depending on the age of your group, you may want to approach this in different ways. Envelopes with students' names and total cash, preferably small denominations, managed in travel groups with a 'Bank' open each morning/evening at a set time so the students have to come and see you to get their cash.

## 2. Excursions

We are happy to reserve or book excursions and visits you may require except where we do not have sufficient time to risk assess an attraction that we are unfamiliar with in advance; in this case, we would recommend that you book directly with the supplier.

Please remember, however, that additional costs incurred on excursions such as entrance fees and transport costs, are not included

in the tour price and you will therefore have to pay this on site or be invoiced prior to departure.

Invoices received at our offices for visits which have not been paid for on entrance will automatically be forwarded to the Party Leader for settlement. You should indicate details of any excursions or visits you wish us to book on your behalf on the excursion form provided.

Please advise us if you decide to cancel any excursions, as cancellation fees may apply. The contact details for each excursion booked or reserved through us can be found on your final itinerary.

We encourage you to think about planning activities at the earliest stage and don't leave it too late to book as you are competing with other schools and tour operators for these slots and there is a finite number of opportunities during peak periods. We would also encourage you to consider allowing for downtime periods as students can become tired.

## 3. Equity representatives

Depending on your package, you may have an Equity Representative for all your requirements and needs (contactable 24 hours a day).

Some of our Equity Representatives live in resort and others may travel with you or meet you on arrival. In some resorts, we also use the service of local staff or agents. A representatives' primary responsibility is to ensure the day to day operation of the trip runs seamlessly and successfully. They are the liaison between Equity, the Party Leader and suppliers in resort. They are your first point of contact for any issues, incidences or concerns.

We would encourage you to discuss the trip itinerary with your Equity representative on the first night.



If you are not travelling to an Equity Club Hotel your representative will call you to introduce themselves a week before departure. It is normal for your representative to join the school at the airport / ferry terminal / or school to travel with the group; please be mindful of this when making arrangements for your outbound and return journeys.

Representatives can never act in loco parentis or be used for monitoring students and they must have school staff present with them when with the group.

We make every effort to place groups with experience of the resort and/or the local language, however this cannot be guaranteed. Please be assured representatives are fully trained and briefed about your trip and are equipped to assist with all your queries in resort.

#### **Ski Tours Trips**

Shortly after arrival your representative will hold a welcome meeting, giving your group important information on lesson times, equipment hire, après ski and lift passes.

Should your representative be unavailable on arrival, they will leave instructions with your hotelier and most hotels have a notice board/guest information folder with further information.

Your representative may not be resident at your hotel and may be responsible for a number of groups staying in the area so be sure to take the emergency in resort contact number. Your representative is not permitted to supervise pupils; Supervisory staff members must be present at all times.

In the event of your group having any cause for complaint, please inform the Equity representative and the relevant supplier (e.g. hotelier, ski school, transport personnel, etc.) immediately. They will do their utmost to resolve the problem during your stay.

If any payments are made to an Equity representative or resort staff in respect of ski breakage, excursions, etc, you should ensure that you obtain an official Company receipt.

If you have paid lift pass or damage deposits in the UK and will require a refund on return to the UK, please ensure you obtain a signed document from the representative resort staff to confirm the amount owed back to you.

#### **4. Phoning home**

Some hotels, more commonly in North America, have phones in rooms and making calls from your hotel rooms can be expensive; if you would like this option removed, please ask your hotelier on arrival. Most resorts sell prepaid phone cards that can be used on payphones. If your party wish to phone home, we would recommend purchasing one of these cards.

To call the UK from Europe, dial 00 44 followed by the UK area code (without the first zero) followed by the number. To call the UK from North America, dial 0 11 44 followed by the UK area code (without the first zero) followed by the number.



## In Resort *continued*

### 5. Dress Code

Proper dress is advised at all religious sites and many museums. Entry may be refused if group members have bare arms, shorts or short skirts.

### 6. Tipping

Coach driver's gratuity: If you travel by coach, it is customary to tip coach driver(s) for good service.

In North America, tipping is obligatory. Most employees in the service industry are taxed based on an expected amount of tips, so whilst in the UK offering a tip would be discretionary and based on exceptional service, in North America it is a standard practice and expected. To assist with your budget planning for the trip, we would recommend the following amounts:

- Bus Drivers: \$50 - \$80 per journey (in an envelope and hand to the driver at the end of the journey)
- Ski Shuttle Drivers: \$1-2 per person per journey

- City Tour Guide: \$2-5 per person, per day (in an envelope and hand to the guide at the end of the tour)
- Hotel housekeeping staff: \$1-2 a day per room
- Ski Instructors: approx. \$100 per instructor for the week
- Meals: Meals booked through Equity have tips included, any additional meals you should expect to pay a 20% tip
- Additional Drinks: 20% tip
- Fast food restaurants (e.g. McDonalds): No tip required

### 7. European City Taxes

Please be aware that many European cities are introducing a city tax that is payable on arrival to your hotel. These taxes have been introduced by local governments to improve tourist infrastructure within the cities. Please ask your Product Delivery Specialist for up to date information on city tax.



# On the Mountain

## 1. Ski equipment hire

Equipment fitting will take place as soon as practically possible after arrival and may be 'in-house' in our French Club Hotels. Students should have ski socks readily available for ski fit; it may be helpful to carry these in hand luggage.

We will have already sent your requirements to the supplier to allow them time to ensure they have adequate supplies in stock. As pupils' requirements may change, additional supplies may need to be arranged from another ski shop whilst in resort.

Please note that any pupil with size 12 boots and over may be asked to obtain their equipment in the UK. We recommend that all children should wear a helmet; if ski helmets are not included on your booking and you would like to include them, it is essential that these are ordered at least 18 weeks prior to departure. In some resorts, local legislation requires that children under a certain age must wear a helmet; please confirm with your Product Delivery Specialist whether this will affect your group.

You must complete all passenger information via the online Teacher Portal and give the height of each person in centimetres, normal UK shoe size and weight in kilograms.

## North America

### Release of Liability Forms

It is a requirement in some resorts that 'Release of Liability Forms' are completed by each student and signed by the parent or legal guardian in order for them to participate in the ski school; this is standard practice. Please enquire with your Product Delivery Specialist.

### Ski Hire Agreements

In order to hire snow sport equipment in North America, everyone will need to complete and sign a ski or snowboard hire declaration form; this is standard practice. We will endeavour to supply you with these forms prior to travel.

## 2. Lift passes

Your lift passes will be prepared by your resort representative and made available to you as soon as possible after arrival. In the event of a ski pass being lost, lift companies are not normally prepared to provide a duplicate pass. In some cases, a new lift pass would then have to be purchased and paid for on the spot. Party Leaders must keep a numerical list of issued passes which will assist replacement in the case of a lost pass. For some resorts, each person may need a passport sized photo; your Product Delivery Specialist will advise you of this in advance.

As you may be aware, most European resorts require a deposit to be paid for the lift pass key cards. If this is applicable to your resort, we will add the relevant deposit charge to your final invoice for each party member requiring a lift pass. This is not applicable for North America. This will be refunded by bank transfer when you return subject to you providing a signed receipt; you must ensure an Equity Representative signs this receipt prior to your departure.

## 3. Ski lessons

Ski tuition in all countries will be provided by the local Ski Schools. Depending on the numbers of hours included in your package, ski lessons are normally split equally either side of lunch, subject to weather conditions.

In case of an accident/injury it is advisable that a teacher accompanies each tuition group. This also enables you to ensure that you are happy with the tuition given. We will always request any preferred times but, these cannot be guaranteed. On high season dates you will be required to show flexibility in your ski school timing and the decision remains largely with the ski school.



## On the Mountain *continued*

Ski tuition is based on groups of 12 pupils of the same ability and snowboard tuition is based on a minimum of 8 of the same ability; depending on your final group breakdown and confirmed passenger numbers it may be necessary to hire another instructor at an additional cost. This should be planned and prepaid in the UK due to limited availability. Standard package prices are based on ski tuition, therefore a snowboard supplement may apply.

We require that at least one teacher must be present prior to morning ski school start; returning for lunch; afternoon ski school start; end of day. This is to ensure that all students are accounted for, answer any questions from ski school and facilitate any students moving between tuition groups.

Whilst not obligatory we would recommend that the school provides pupils with school bibs/t-shirts/helmet covers that can be worn over ski jackets as an identifier on the mountain.

Please be aware that lessons are available to students only unless otherwise agreed. Children aged 7 years and under cannot be accepted for normal group lessons, concessions offered to Party Leader's children cannot be extended to kindergarten or special classes for younger children. Party Leaders will need to budget for this expense if this facility is required. If adults would like to arrange lessons, these can be pre-booked with your Product Delivery Specialist.

### 4. Lunch

Please check your lunch inclusions with your Product Delivery Specialist prior to departure. Lunch options in Europe are as follows:

- Packed lunch
- Hot lunch in a Mountain restaurant (where available)
- Hot lunch at your Hotel

Lunch in North America is purchased at the base lodge. Vouchers can be prepaid in the UK.

### 5. Weather conditions

If you experience mild weather during your trip please bear in mind that this will possibly affect the skiing areas, natural ice skating rinks etc. Conversely, too much snow can also have the same effect with lift installations not being able to function.

Please note that the average temperature in North American ski resorts is around 0 to minus 20 degrees Celsius from December until mid-March. Therefore you must have adequate clothing as any exposed skin can get frost bitten, so you must be vigilant at all times. It is advisable to wear more than one layer of clothing, rather than one thick layer! Hats and ski gloves are essential and it may be a good idea to have a spare pair of gloves for the evening.





## 7. Kit list

You may wish to remind your party of the following recommended items for packing:

- Personal medication
- Travel sickness pills
- Sun cream
- Sunglasses
- Ski goggles
- Lip salve
- Ski hat
- Gloves
- Ski suit/salopettes
- Ski jacket
- Layers to wear under ski gear – vests, t-shirts, sweatshirts, thermals
- Ski socks
- Snow boots or shoes
- Towel
- Swimming costume
- Toiletries
- Night clothes
- Suitable leisurewear – warm



## Complaints and incidents

If something does not go to plan, please advise us in the first instance so that we can do everything in our power to rectify the situation. Some groups will have a rep or a guide who should always be advised immediately. If you do not have a rep or guide, you should contact either our UK office or our out of hours duty office: please find these details in your travel pack and Itinerary document.

We hope that you will not have cause for complaint on your return however if you do, we will endeavour to investigate and resolve it to your satisfaction. Please bear in mind that you ought to report your complaint at the time to allow us the opportunity to put things right. Failure to do so may limit your rights to compensation.

### Your Feedback

Finally, we hope you enjoy your tour trip with us and that we will have the pleasure of organising tours for your school for many years to come. To help us to continually improve our service, we would be grateful if you could complete our questionnaire (Your Product Delivery Specialist will send you the link). Your comments and feedback are considered a valuable source of monitoring the quality of our trips and we are always keen to receive any positive feedback and constructive suggestions.

