



UK connection

Health & Safety Travel Notes

TRAVEL SAFELY, RETURN HEALTHY

Our Commitment to You

We wish you a fun, enjoyable and educational trip. But we also want you to stay safe and healthy during your travels. We are committed to only selecting transport, accommodation, activity and excursion providers (on your behalf) that have good health and safety provisions in place.

The School Travel Forum (STF)

Certain activities, such as skiing, are intrinsically hazardous in their nature and can never be risk free. But in being a member of the industry recognised School Travel Forum (STF) and complying with their Code of Practice, you can be assured that we organise a trip tailored to meet your needs and wishes and the components of which, we have assessed specifically with the safety of children in mind.

Safety Management Systems

Our compliance with the STF Code of Practice and our own Safety Management System, driving us to exceed the requirements of STF membership, are independently audited annually. For information about the STF, or to obtain a copy of their membership Code of Practice visit: <http://www.schooltravelforum.com/safety-management-standards> Our membership certification and our Safety Management System can be downloaded from our websites, or sent to you on request made to your personal Tour Co-ordinator.

Risk Assessment

As a Party Leader, we understand your responsibility to your student group to risk assess the trip you plan to take. You may find the STF document 'Demystifying Risk Assessments' helpful:

<http://www.schooltravelforum.com/demystifying-risk-assessments> We will assist you in this task wherever we reasonably possibly can. This may be in the form of providing you with copies of our risk assessments, or completing an External Provider H&S Questionnaire to the satisfaction of your Local Education Authority or governing body.

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)

We would like to highlight that we also have 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, where the Questionnaire simply seeks to check for provisions already independently confirmed as in place by way of the annual LOtC audit and accreditation process:

<http://oeap.info/what-we-do/oeap-compliance> Our accreditation certification can be downloaded from our websites, or sent to you on request made to your personal Tour Co-ordinator. Visit: <http://www.oeap.info/find-an-adviser> to check if your OEAP officer accepts the LOtC Quality Badge. For information about the OEAP visit: <http://oeap.info/> and for information about the LOtC scheme visit: <http://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/> or <http://www.schooltravelforum.com/council-for-learning-outside-the-classroom-quality-badge/>

Public Liability Insurance and Financial Security

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

Sources of Travel Health and Safety Information

We recommend that all travellers should read the Department of Health guidance leaflet 'T7.1 Health Advice for Travellers':

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4123441

To obtain up-to-date general travel information and country specific health advice, we also recommend visiting the Foreign Commission Office (FCO) website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe/health/>

The role of the UK Health protection Agency (HPA) is to protect UK public health through the provision of support and advice to other health related authorities and so schools (via local authorities). The HPA often issue a 'Position Statement' regarding any significant current worldwide health issues in the news, to inform the UK public how their health may be affected: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/>

Health facilities, hygiene standards and disease risks vary worldwide. You should seek medical advice about your specific health needs relative to your chosen countries of travel as early as possible, to ensure that vaccinations or preventative measures such as malaria tablets are administered early enough (which may be a month or more prior to departure) to be fully effective by the date of travel.

Sources of UK medical information include The National Health Service (NHS): <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/travelhealth/Pages/Travelhealthhome.aspx> and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website: <http://www.nathnac.org/travel/index.htm> But we strongly advise you to consult your own general medical practitioner (GP) who will be in the best position to take into account any relevant personal health factors or any current disease epidemics in your chosen country of travel when advising you, as requirements may change frequently and rapidly

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 general 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. Where however water is unavailable or not considered safe to drink, a good source of guidance is the NaTHNaC information sheet 'Food and Water Hygiene': http://www.nathnac.org/travel/misc/travellers_food.htm

In addition to all the above, we would like to provide you with the following tips, information and guidance (which we strongly recommend that you read) to help you travel safely and return home healthy:

General Conduct

For the benefit of and in fairness to other guests at an accommodation premises, please ensure that students are supervised sufficiently to ensure their good behaviour within the building and grounds; groups that conduct themselves well are appreciated and remembered by a hotelier and so are usually welcomed back, or are not welcome to return in the case of poor behaviour. 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, which specify: no child under the age of 18 (or age 21 in the USA) is to consume alcoholic drinks without express written parental consent, no member of the group will consume alcohol to excess, all local laws concerning alcohol consumption are followed at all times, no member of the group will make use of illegal substances, no member of the group is to smoke in accommodation bedrooms or smoke in any manner that poses a fire hazard, all members of the group must act responsibly and do not behave in a way that causes or is likely to cause damage to property or injury, distress, or danger to other people, or commit any illegal offence against property or other people. We reserve the right to cancel the remainder of your trip and have no further contractual obligations to you at any time the group fails to meet these Terms and Conditions.

Thus, in accordance with local laws, alcohol will not be served to persons under the age of 18 staying at our Clubhotels. We therefore respectfully ask that group supervisory adults do not ask our bar staff to do so and issue is not taken when they politely decline such a request. Some local laws stipulate that only a parent can purchase alcohol for a child and being in 'loco parentis' is not sufficient.

Coach Transfers

It is not safe to walk up and down or sleep in the coach aisle when a coach is in transit. Seat belts will be present for all passengers on UK operated coaches, which should be worn at all times. It is for group supervisory adults to check that seat belts are worn where appropriate; this is not the responsibility of the coach driver. The wearing of seat belts is also a legal requirement in many overseas countries such as France, where failure to do so can incur an on-the-spot fine of up to €750 per passenger. It is the passenger's responsibility to wear a seat belt, except in the case of children age 13 years or younger, when it is the responsibility of the Party Leader, who would in turn be awarded the fine.

If the coach is a double decker, supervisory adults should be present on both levels to ensure student safety and good behaviour. Please be aware however that whilst we preferentially source coaches with seatbelts, in some countries such as America, it is not a legal requirement to have them in place and so most operators do not, but are nevertheless compliant with the national standards of their country.

In France, it is also a legal requirement that a child must not sit next to a coach emergency exit door (of which there are usually 3). If numbers dictate, an adult must fill the seat, as they are more likely to take appropriate action in the event that it is necessary to make use of the exit. Failure to do so could incur an on-the-spot fine of up to €4000, for which the Party Leader would be accountable. If the emergency exits are not obvious to you, ask your driver to highlight them before you set off on your journey.

When disembarking a coach, especially at the destination premises, please remind all group members to exit slowly and carefully, checking both directions for traffic, taking into account it may be forgotten that traffic may now be on a different side of the road than is usual and smaller accommodation premises may not have designated coach disembarkation bays set back from the road. Ideally, a group supervisory adult should be the first to exit to oversee disembarkation.

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.

Once on board any mode of transport, a Party Leader should ensure that the group listens to the Safety Announcements that will be made at the start of a journey or crossing.

Transport operators request and recommend that whilst on board, a Party Leader keeps a group together (in so far as is practically possible / where seating arrangements allow), under supervision and that a group behaves in a quiet and orderly manner, respectful of other passengers.

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. P&O Ferries have produced a Risk Assessment 'The Behaviour of Young Persons (on board)' which can be provided to you on request.

In the case of rail or airplane crossings, there may be limited space, so discouraging the movement of large groups during the journey may be appreciated by other passengers. - In the case of a rail transfer by coach, passengers are required to remain within their coach for their own safety.

Fire Safety

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 provisions in place and as a minimum, meet the national fire safety standards of their country, but there are a number of things that a group can do to take care of itself. Within 24 hours of your arrival (ideally on the first night) our Clubhotels and Chateau premises will carry out an emergency fire evacuation practice drill, in which all group members should participate. At other third party premises, we require that at your request, the hotelier provides your group with an emergency fire evacuation talk. In either case, a Party Leader should satisfy themselves that their group knows:

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

On discovering a fire

- To not attempt to fight the fire, that the priority is to leave the building quickly and calmly
- To alert others to the fire if you can: phone Reception to advise them, pass by Reception to advise them, make use of an alarm call point / break glass box, bang on bedroom doors (but do not stop) shouting 'fire' as you pass them
- To follow the advice 'On hearing the alarm'

On hearing the alarm

- If a door handle is hot to the touch, do not open it, it can only be hot because fire is close enough to heat it
- To make use of the emergency evacuation routes
- To make your way to the Assembly Point and wait there for your group to join you
- To not return to your room to collect belongings
- To not make use of lifts
- To walk quickly, but not to run, in case this causes you to fall
- To close any doors you pass through behind you, to keep smoke back
- That if smoke is building up above you affecting your vision or breathing, to crawl on hands and knees
- That if there is smoke in stairways you are making use of, make use of any handrails present
- That at the Assembly Point, do not immediately make phone calls until the situation is established, otherwise poor information may unnecessarily confuse and panic those receiving the calls
- That on being unable to leave your room due to smoke or fire, close (but do not lock) all doors between you and the furthest point away from the fire, place wet clothes / towels / sheets along the bottom of doors to hold smoke back and try to make contact with someone to tell them you are there by a room or mobile phone. That if there is a balcony, go out on to it, try to alert people outside to your presence and need for help and try not jump from anything higher than a first floor room (ideally onto a mattress you throw out before you); above the first floor the risk of harm is likely greater than if you wait to be rescued.

Glass Doors and Windows

Not all overseas countries require that large panes of glass (floor to ceiling doors and windows) must be made of strengthened glass, which makes them prone to breaking if a medium amount of force is applied. We encourage the hoteliers of the accommodation premises we use to apply stickers to large glass panes to try to highlight that they are not an open door or window.

If large panes of glass are present in rooms, a Party Leader should highlight the risk of falling / running into the glass to the room occupants and horseplay within bedrooms should be discouraged. If window stickers are not present, consider putting an obstacle in the way, such as a chair in front of a glass door or window extending to the floor.

Balconies

Most accommodation premises in ski resorts have balconies, as do many in overseas resorts that are frequently sunny. But balconies should be treated with respect; whilst providing the opportunity to enjoy good weather from the comfort of your room, they also pose a risk of falling from height, which would likely result in significant, serious and possibly even fatal injury. We seek to only make use of premises meeting a minimum standard of 1m high balcony guard rails (1.1m high for newly constructed premises) and ideally with no horizontal bars that can be easily climbed. But even where these protection measures are in place, it is still for a Party Leader to decide whether or not students should be permitted to go out onto balconies: -

Prohibition of balcony use should be a clear instruction given by the Party Leader to the group if that is their decision. If use is permitted, leaning over and sitting or climbing on the balcony should be prohibited.

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 also still acceptable to have lifts without internal doors and so exposed walls. In these types of lift, passengers must stand back from the exposed walls otherwise injury could occur if contact is made with the wall whilst the lift is in motion. Party Leaders should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the type of lift and lift instructions at their accommodation premises and instruct their group accordingly. No lift should be used in the event of a fire alarm, in case the electrical system is affected and the lift becomes stuck in transit.

Floorings

Many overseas premises do not have carpeted floorings; in ski resorts so that they can be easily cleaned and in summer resorts, stone and marble flooring is common for a cooling effect. But such surfaces can be very slippery when wet. A hotel should display temporary warning signage when a temporary slip hazard exists and should 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 this type of flooring can pose and bring it to the attention of the group where found to be present.

Electrics

Be aware that in addition to different electrical voltage and plug socket design, electrical standards and provisions (mains and portable appliances) can be very different in overseas countries to that in the UK. But ultimately the electrical system should still be essentially safe and we will not make use of any premises where we have a significant concern that this may not be the case.

One issue of note is that in some overseas countries there may be plug sockets present in bathrooms. Where this is the case, we recommend a Party Leader should 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, immediately report these concerns to hotel management.

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 in post. But it is not a 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 this information can be provided to you by your personal Tour Co-ordinator on request.

But it should never be relied upon that a lifeguard will be present. 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 life saving qualification, so that student water immersion activities can be overseen by a suitably qualified person at all times.

We seek premises that recognise good pool safety standards, such as no hidden obstructions or overhangs, no sudden depth changes without clear signage indicating this, signage present to indicate pool depths, pool use Rules displayed by the pool, clean clear water with a visible pool bottom, an absence of trip hazards around the pool, easy access and egress into the pool and illuminated after sunset or access prevented.

A Party Leader should seek to ensure the following:

- Adhere to pool opening times.
- Observe pool signage.
- Do not allow members of the group to swim if suffering from a gastrointestinal upset and for at least 48hrs afterwards.
- Do not allow members of the group to swim straight after a meal.
- Prohibit running and horseplay around the poolside.
- Only allow diving where it is clearly permitted and never in water less than 1.5m deep.
- Do 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 guidelines covering activities that involve water immersion for further guidance.

To participate in 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.

Illness

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 general 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; 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 therefore encourage a Party Leader to constantly prompt a group to drink water throughout the day in a summer resort and increase this consumption if also undertaking activity. The group will likely need personal drinking bottles to achieve this and to save carrying large bulk supplies or the expense of constantly purchasing drinks from shops.

It is important that we have a record of all illness that affects our guests whilst travelling with us, so please report sickness to your Resort Rep or our Clubhotel, Chalet and Chateau managers. It is very important that we are promptly told of illness occurring at our Clubhotel, Chalet and Chateau premises, so that we can take appropriate hygiene mitigation and management steps, in an effort to prevent the spread of infectious illness.

Norovirus (the 'winter vomiting bug')

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 (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, such as from coughing without covering the mouth, unclean hand-to-hand contact, unclean hand to shared eating / drinking utensils, or hand contact with unclean surfaces (door handles, toilet handles, taps, lift buttons) etc. Hence outbreaks are common in high volume compact occupied premises, such as hospitals, schools, hotels and cruise ships and can take some time to clear from the premises once present.

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. Sufferers usually always completely recover, but the symptoms can be more severe for the very young, the elderly, or those with existing poor health. 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.

Room confinement (when no symptoms are present) may seem harsh, but due to the virus being highly contagious, it must be appreciated that the likely outcome of leaving confinement when still a viral carrier is that the illness spreads to and then affects other members of the group or other guests sharing the accommodation premises. Viral transmission by a carer or someone sharing the room with the sufferer (and so entering and leaving the room) is also a likely possibility and should be taken into account. Frequent and thorough hand washing can reduce the risk of transmission, but reinfection from contaminated taps, towels or door handles etc is possible. This is why it is very important to notify accommodation premises management of a Norovirus type illness promptly, so that housekeeping staff can be advised and take steps to protect themselves and also clean the room in a way appropriate to the situation.

If any member of the group suffers acute gastrointestinal upset (vomiting and/or diarrhoea) within 72 hours prior to departure, please require the sufferer to consult their doctor that they are fit to fly and are no longer a carrier of an infectious illness. Because as much as it would be disappointing to not travel due to illness in the days before departure, it must be appreciated that in the case of a highly contagious illness, which a person may still carry despite showing no symptoms of sickness (for up to 48 hours), the likely outcome is that the illness spreads to and then affects other members of the group and possibly other guests sharing the same coach / plane / train / hotel.

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.

Medical Conditions with Special Dietary Requirements - Food Intolerances and Food Allergies

On advising us of any special dietary requirements, ideally at the time of booking so that we can try to source the best accommodation to meet the needs of the group at an early stage, we will forward this information on to our / relevant suppliers over which we have some influence, 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. Regardless, it remains for a Party Leader to ensure that provisions are fulfilled correctly. To ensure this, it is recommended that you reconfirm and discuss any dietary needs of the group with a hotelier on arrival. We ask that the medical need and severity is made clear, especially in the case of a food allergy that could result in anaphylactic shock. In such a case, we would expect a bespoke risk assessment for the sufferer to have been completed by the Party Leader and provided to us well in advance of the date of travel.

In our experience (unless staying at one of our Clubhotels, Chalets or our Chateau) many overseas hotels do not have a good understanding of special dietary requirements, or simply choose not to cater for, and so it may be advisable in some cases to travel with stocks of special food items to substitute or supplement the meals provided; no refund can be offered for a lack of suitable food provision for those travelling with special dietary requirements. There is also a general lack of understanding regarding vegetarianism (being served a plate of nothing more than vegetables can happen). If vegetarian options are not satisfactory, please appreciate that this may simply be because of a lack of understanding and proffer reasonably practicable alternative meal suggestions to hotel staff.

First Aid Treatment

Our staff are not responsible for providing first aid treatment to your group. It is therefore advisable that group supervisory adults have access to a first aid kit (remember to place this in hold luggage when flying if sharp implements are present) and one or more adults are qualified in Emergency First Response and/or First Aid. Ski resorts will however have a 24/7hrs Medical Centre with on-call doctors and the mountain operator will have emergency Mountain Rescue arrangements in place. Ski Instructors will have also received training in first aid as part of their professional qualification. But ultimately, group access to first aid treatment is the responsibility of the Party Leader to organise and ensure.

Roll Call

Our staff are not responsible for the supervision of students in any way, this is the responsibility of a Party Leader and group supervisory adults. We therefore respectfully ask that our staff are not asked to undertake supervisory duties and issue is not taken when they politely decline such a request. Thus our staff should not be left as the sole adult present with your group and a Party Leader should ensure that a group supervisory adult is present at all times where alternative formal supervisory arrangements (e.g. under the care of a Ski Instructor during specified ski lessons) are not in place, such as 'free ski' times. It is therefore also the responsibility of a Party Leader to undertake a group roll call and make regular checks that all students can be accounted for at all times.

Dress Code

Students should be advised that it is common practice overseas (for example in France) that swimming caps and speedo type swimming trunks must be worn in swimming pools, on health and hygiene grounds. Shorts type trunks (that could be worn as everyday external clothing) are not permitted.

So to not cause offence and be unwelcome, students should be advised that many overseas religious sites and some museums prohibit bare arms or bare legs (the wearing of T-shirts, shorts or short skirts). Please be aware that entry may be refused in some cases if attire is considered disrespectful relative to the nature of the premises.

And finally.....

24/7 Assistance

We are committed to only selecting transport, accommodation, activity and excursion providers (on your behalf) that have good health and safety provisions in place. We are also committed to seeking continual improvement in our own health and safety standards and those of our suppliers. To assist us with this, we welcome post trip feedback from our groups.

However, it is often much easier to resolve a problem (and thus more beneficial) if it raised at the time it is occurring, or as soon after. Therefore, please do raise any issues on-the spot with coach drivers, hoteliers, other service providers or our Resort representatives, especially those involving health and safety concerns. Alternatively, if you wish to avoid confrontation, contact your personal Tour Co-ordinator to raise issues for you.

Familiarise yourself with your 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 rousing 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. In our travel documents, we will also provide a Party Leader with a telephone number for use at any time 24/7hrs to offer assistance to the group (where we reasonably practically can) to resolve any significant urgent difficulty that arises, or to help you manage any emergency that occurs.

Please do not hesitate to call the Duty Office if any component of your trip gives you serious cause for concern regarding the health and safety of the group. But please do not freely distribute this telephone number, even to parents, otherwise if the service is overwhelmed by non-emergency matters or requests for general information, it will be unable to perform the intended function effectively.

SKI SPECIFIC:

Ski Helmets and Body Protection

We recommend that all children partaking in ski and snowboard activities wear a protective helmet, because in the case of a fall or collision accident, a head injury is a foreseeable consequence in an icy, rocky and tree covered alpine piste environment. 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 only way to ensure that no head injury can ever occur as a result of ski or snowboard activities is to not undertake them, which defeats the objective of Learning Outside the Classroom principles. The best way to protect against a ski or snowboard head injury is to ski or board within the limits of your ability, to follow the Rules set out in the ISF Code of Conduct and to not allow any body protection to give rise to a feeling of invincibility, causing you to ski or board recklessly and / or dangerously. Such controlled behaviour will also ensure that not only do you reduce the likelihood and severity of injury that you may cause to yourself, but also the injury you may cause to others; a 50-100Kg body in full body protection travelling at speed would likely cause another person (especially a young child) serious injury in the event of an uncontrolled collision accident.

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, please contact your personal Tour Co-ordinator for further details.

Ski Codes of Conduct

The International Ski Federation (ISF) has compiled the following 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:

ISF CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) Respect: Do not endanger others.
- 2) Control: Adapt the manner and speed of your skiing to your ability and to the general conditions on the mountain.
- 3) Choice of route: The skier/snowboarder in front has priority - leave enough space.
- 4) Overtaking: Leave plenty of space when overtaking a slower skier/snowboarder.
- 5) Entering and starting: Look up and down the mountain each time before starting or entering a marked run.
- 6) Stopping: Only stop at the edge of the piste or where you can easily be seen.
- 7) Climbing: When climbing up or down, always keep to the side of the piste.
- 8) Signs: Obey all signs and markings - they are there for your safety.
- 9) Assistance: In case of accidents provide help and alert the rescue service.
- 10) Identification: All those involved in an accident, including witnesses, should exchange names and addresses.

The following two Guides provide further piste safety information. We recommend that a Party Leader makes all members of a group aware of this guidance and follow the advice contained within:

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF ON THE SLOPES (taken from guidance by Ecole du Ski Français)

General Care

- Have insurance to cover skiing accidents, first aid services aren't free of charge.
- Obtain the weather forecast and information about the slopes (opening / closing times).
- Obtain and keep a piste map in your individual possession.
- Physical preparation: warm up exercises. Eat and drink to match your effort in the mountains and the effects of the sun and the cold. Protect yourself: sunglasses, sun cream, gloves and hats.
- Make sure your equipment is right for your level of ability, maintained and well adjusted.
- Protect yourself: helmets for children.
- Do not go off piste without being well informed (avalanche risk, route) or assisted by a mountain professional.
- As for every sport, practice makes perfect. Learn technique, ski at your level of ability.
- At the ski lifts, take notice of and follow the regulations indicated at departure of each device.

How to use the Ski Lifts

On chair lifts, respect the 5 safety measures:

- 1) On loading, place your backpack in front of you. Otherwise you could get caught on the chair at arrival.
- 2) If you have a problem at set off, let the chair go, another will follow. Otherwise you could get stuck in a difficult position.

- 3) Lower the chair safety bar. Otherwise you could fall out of the chair.
- 4) Be patient. Never jump out of the chair, even if it is stationary. You are always higher than you think you are and could seriously hurt yourself.
- 5) On arrival, if you can't get out of the chair, remain seated! Let your legs touch the safety trip bar crossing your path of descent and the lift should stop automatically.

On drag lifts, respect the 5 safety measures:

- 1) Remove any straps from your wrists – remove poles and hold together in one hand. Otherwise you could get entangled with the bar.
- 2) Do not slalom on the way up – point skis in the direction of travel. If you fall, do not hold on to the bar. Let go and clear the track as quickly as possible by moving to the side.
- 3) Hold on to the bar until arrival. Otherwise the cable could jump off the rails and may injure people travelling up behind you.
- 4) At arrival, let go of the bar after the signpost instructing you to do so. If you travel past the arrival area, you will activate the automatic stop.
- 5) Clear the arrival area as quickly as possible. Otherwise the next person or empty bar could bump into you.

ASSISTING IN THE CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

If you are injured in an accident or witness an accident, here are a few pointers which may help you:

- 1) Secure the accident area from any immediate danger. - Seek to protect yourself first, assisting a casualty is secondary.
- 2) Protect the casualty from further danger, for example, with crossed skis or planted snowboard above the injured person. If necessary, post someone above to give warning.
- 3) Administer emergency first response / first aid - assess the general condition of the casualty:
 - ABC: Airway - check it is clear, remove obstructions if necessary.
 - Breathing - check for breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if necessary.
 - Circulation - feel for a pulse, give CPR if necessary.
 - Cover any wound and apply firm pressure if bleeding profusely.
 - Provide warmth - give nothing to eat or drink, especially alcohol.
- 4) Alert the rescue services:
 - Place of accident (piste name and nearest piste marker).
 - Number of people injured.
 - Type of injury.
- 5) Establish the facts of the accident:
 - Names and addresses of people involved and of witnesses.
 - Place, time and circumstances of accident.
 - Terrain, snow conditions and visibility.
 - Markings and signs present.
 - Report to the police as soon as possible.

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