

## COVID-19 GUARANTEE 2022-2023

It's fantastic that the lifting of restrictions means that you can safely book ahead once more and enjoy trips and tours whether here at home or to international destinations. There remain plenty of considerations and there's no substitute for being well-informed and well prepared of course. There are lots of different 'guarantees' being offered in our sector and an understanding of what is being offered is important, wherever and with whomever you ultimately choose to book. Our own **Absolute COVID Promise** is aimed at restoring customer confidence so that you can book a trip with as much peace of mind as possible, while being as transparent and as fair as we can.

Rest assured that we are committed to working together with you to find the best individual solution for your group in any scenario. This is the personal approach that we continue to take with all our customers. So, let's always stay in touch. Of course, if it isn't viable to travel based on Government restrictions closer to the time of your trip, then we'll be here to talk it through - just as we have been in the past and will be in the future.

### **REFUNDS, CANCELLATIONS & DEFERRALS for GROUPS TRAVELLING in 2022**

For clarity, you will be offered a **full refund** if:

- The FCDO advises against all but essential travel to your destination in the days leading up to your trip (typically within 2-4 weeks pre-departure).
- We cancel your holiday because your destination has closed its borders and we are unable to provide the package
- We are unable to deliver your trip for another reason (your tournament is cancelled, ski resort closed etc) and a suitable alternative cannot be found

What's more, as **travel insurance** is included in all our school and youth group trip packages for 2022, you will also be covered if any individuals in your travelling party:

1. Test positive for Covid-19 in the 10 days prior to the trip
2. Are forced to self-isolate based on track and trace or PHE advice
3. Require Covid-19 medical cover in destination

That's a huge reassurance for you (and us) in the planning and booking of your trip.

However, if **you decide to cancel** or want to defer instead, then you are **not entitled** to a refund. That means if you choose, or feel unable, to take the trip as planned - and wish to cancel your booking at any stage (what tour operators and the insurance industry often refer to as '**a disinclination to travel**'), then our standard terms and conditions would typically apply. However, as long as your payments are fully up to date at the time and the decision not to travel is based on genuine substantiated Covid-19 concerns, we'll still work with you to defer your trip and to liaise with our suppliers to ensure the best possible arrangements on your behalf. Please bear in mind that unavoidable additional costs may still be imposed. If you wish to cancel instead, then we will offer you as much of a refund as we are able once all our expenses and overheads have been met.

The special terms above are effective for all school and college group bookings for trips and tours scheduled to depart in 2022. These offers only apply to a full group cancellation, or deferral or where Government restrictions impact on the viability of the tour when you are due to travel. They do not apply to cancellations relating to individual passengers, which remain subject to our standard terms and conditions. Please see full wording for details.

### **ENHANCED SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

As fully Assured members of the **School Travel Forum (STF)**, our Managing Director also sits on the STF committee. The committee has invested a considerable amount of collective time and energy into ensuring the best possible guidance and support for school travel moving forwards in conjunction with **ABTA** and other industry **health and safety partners**.

Our standard audits for accommodation, transportation and other elements are now the subject of **supplementary Covid-19 audit checks** so that we can monitor the measures that have been put in place by our suppliers and ensure the highest possible safety for our groups. We can help with **template risk assessments** and any health and safety documentation that you need as well.

### **MORE FLEXIBILITY & SUPPORT**

We are committed to working with all our group leaders, to agree the most sensible and workable payment schedules and **to offer as much flexibility as we can**. This includes **reduced deposit** commitments whenever this is viable and **extension to payment dates** whenever this can be negotiated with our suppliers. This needs to be a team approach and we'll always promise to be as fair and as transparent as possible. We are best served by all **working together** to find the best way forward in every scenario, and we're always here to help. As a small, independently owned and family managed company with thirty years in the business, **we treat our customers as individuals**, not numbers, and you can always reach us to discuss any concerns or challenges in person.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Despite the best endeavours of everyone in the group travel market to find a solution at every level, there is no **commercial insurance** cover in the market that will allow schools to seek reimbursement if they cancel a trip that has been booked, based on any disinclination to travel, due to the advice of the DfE, local authorities or your own leadership teams. You are best liaising with **the RPA** or your own commercial insurers at the school in the first instance.

That's why we worked tirelessly with the **School Travel Forum** and **ABTA** to develop a **new bespoke travel insurance product for groups with AXA** that we feel is second to none. As well as including all the elements that we would want and expect in a policy for schools and groups, there is **Covid-19 cancellation and curtailment cover for anyone testing positive** and support in destination too. Our primary concern remains the **duty of care to our customers**, as well as their **safety, their wellbeing and support**. We want all our groups to have the best travel insurance at their disposal, especially in these challenging times. Please visit the Info-zone on our website for policy details and links.