

COVID-19 GUARANTEE

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. The integrity and closeness of our relationships - both with our groups and indeed with our suppliers - has been strengthened during these difficult times and this continues to remain our ethos now, just as during the thirty years before. 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 over the last year or so and will be in the future. Please read the following carefully and let us know if you have any questions or would like to have a chat.

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.
- Your destination Government precludes your trip from taking place.
- We are unable to deliver your trip for another reason (your tournament is cancelled, ski resort closed etc).

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.

FCDO advises against travel for your dates of travel*

If FCDO advice prevents travel to your destination for the dates of your trip, then you are entitled to a **full cash refund** or to **defer the trip**, whichever you prefer, in accordance with the Package Travel Regulations (as long as your payments are fully up to date in accordance with our terms and conditions at the time). *All trips and tours that were cancelled due to FCDO advice since the start of the pandemic, were fully reimbursed by us at the time or deferred to a later date.*

DfE advises against travel for your dates of travel*

The DfE has now lifted all restrictions on the booking of both domestic and international travel so that you can travel in accordance with FCDO advice. Were the DfE to re-instate advice against school travel in the future which would impact on the dates of your trip, **we'll work with you** to defer your trip to a future date and **liaise with our suppliers** to ensure the best possible arrangements (as long as your payments are fully up to date in accordance with our terms and conditions at the time). If a deferral is not possible or you would prefer not to defer, then we will be able to offer you as much of a refund as we are able to secure from our suppliers, once our expenses have been met.

You/the school/Trust decide not to travel, although advice allows you to continue with the trip*

If you decide for whatever reason that you do not wish, 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 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 due to any disinclination to travel, nor to any 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. What's more, we'll continue to work with our suppliers including ski providers, sports venues and attractions to ensure that you are **always well informed**. We can help with **template risk assessments** and are here to help with any health and safety documentation that you need.

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.

That's why we have been working tirelessly with the **School Travel Forum and ABTA** in recent months to develop a **new bespoke travel insurance product for groups** 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 for those required to self-isolate as well.

We are delighted that this new policy, **backed by ABTA under their Travel Sure brand**, will give reassurance and confidence to schools, group leaders, parents and any governing bodies 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 Travel Insurance section on our website for policy details and the appropriate links.

Absolute Travel and Tours Covid-19 Promise, updated 20-August-2021