



## **OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

Please read thoroughly

Organization:  
Destination / Tour:  
Departure Date:  
Log-On for Registration:  
Registration Trip Code:  
Deposit Structure:  
    Initial Deposit:  
    Second Deposit:  
    Final Payment:  
Registration Closes:  
Last Date for any Data Changes:

Greetings from the STEM Study Tours Operations Department! We are delighted that you have elected to travel with us and hope that your upcoming trip will be your best trip yet. This memorandum is to notify you of the items required to ensure your trip runs successfully. Please read carefully and let us know if you have any questions or need our assistance in any way.

### **Passenger Registration**

Parents/Guardians of students as well as staff members will register directly on our portal. Travelers will be asked for a variety of information to include full legal names and dates of births, passport information if required, waiver/release of liability signature, food and other allergies, medical conditions and needs, along with other key elements. Each parent or staff member will register independently through their personal email address. You will be given an 'admin view' to be able to view registrations at any time. You may also have to provide additional information based on your specific tour which may include independent waivers from suppliers (NASA, ziplining, scuba diving, whitewater rafting, etc.). We'll let you know ahead of time what is required so you are set up for success.

Additionally, parents will be required to sign all required waivers prior to being able to submit their deposit. Deposits are taken in our portal and may be submitted via credit card or ACH for online checks. If you prefer to collect the money at your school/organization and pay by collective payment, this is also available. Please contact us if you prefer this method. Please do understand that once a method has been established – either by individual payments or by collective payments – it is required for every member traveling on your tour and



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may not be changed. Most schools opt to have their parents pay individually when signing up as it takes the responsibilities away from funds collection/management at the school level, but still enables your staff to monitor all progressions in real time. Also, please be advised that the system where information is entered serves as a financial clearing house so no one on our SST team has access to private financial information. You can feel safe and protected.

**When submitting passport details, it is imperative that parents double check all entries for accuracy.** This means full legal names (no nicknames), dietary and medical information. We have found that the best practice is that when passengers are initially signing up for the trip, they submit a photocopy of their passport/ID so you also have all the relative information necessary. It is equally important that if anyone traveling needs to apply for or renew a passport, it is done in a timely manner to ensure that **final passports will be returned prior to the due date assigned.**

Please be aware that if traveling via flight, this information is submitted directly to the airlines. If you have a change to any passenger (including a passport number, expiration date or even a slight misspelling of a legal name), the airlines will charge a fee to make the revision. The general fee is generally between \$100 to \$300 per change, dependent upon the airline, and you will be responsible for submitting any fees necessary prior to the re-issue of tickets. If one member of your party is delayed it can result in that party member not being able to be ticketed and therefore, unable to travel with your group.

- If traveling by air with us, all names must exactly match the names shown on the traveler's passport/identification. **No nicknames may be used.** This is submitted directly to the airlines for ticketing so any non-matches, regardless of how minor, may cause the passenger not to be able to travel at check-in. Please ensure all persons filling out the registration fully understand this.
- If any person traveling has a middle name shown on his/her passport/identification, this must be shown.

If for any reason, you do need to make a change to your data after your due date has expired and modifications are no longer allowed, please notify us for assistance. We will unlock the platform for you to make the change required and then contact any parties needed (airlines, etc.) to try to find the solution with the least financial impact for the change you require. Unfortunately, we may not make the changes on your behalf. This ensures that all changes made are 100% accurate and represent your needs.

## Rooming List

Your quote that has been issued is based on the specific amount of rooms your group will utilize and how many people are occupying each room. If you are staying in multiple locations, you may have a separate Rooming List for each hotel. Please check your Provisional Booking Letter to determine your assigned rooming. If for any reason you need to change the rooming assigned, please let us know at your very earliest convenience so we can then enquire if additional rooms will be available and also revise your costs based on your independent needs. Rooming lists will be available on our online portal, simply open up a room and assign each passenger to a room as you prefer. It is a super simple process to use and also easy to make changes if needed. Please do know that unfortunately, hotels will not disclose actual room numbers until physical check-in.

## Travel Insurance Policy

Please be advised that all schools traveling are required to have travel insurance to protect against unforeseen circumstances such as flight delays and/or cancellations, road incidents causing delays, injury and illnesses, and other factors. You may feel free to use your own independent carrier, or if you would prefer, we are happy to refer you to a carrier that specializes in school group travel. Either way, please understand that we will require a copy of the key pages of your group policy showing coverage prior to travel. **We strongly recommend travel**



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**insurance is purchased at the time of trip sale to protect against any passenger cancellations you might incur.** We also very strongly recommend you purchase a single group policy rather than individual policies to avoid stressful situations in case of need. Group travel insurance should include travel AND medical components. **We suggest a ‘cancel for any reason’ policy is purchased to protect against possible loss due to unforeseen circumstances.** Always carry your policy when traveling and leave one copy with a trusted source at home in case of immediate need.

## Flights

If traveling via flight, please know that your specific flight details are generally available approximately 90-days prior to departure. Please also understand that although we always try to ensure your preferences are achieved, we may only guarantee that flights are ticketed as per the general itinerary noted (departure from a general area – i.e. New York, not JFK, La Guardia or Newark specifically). Additionally, please understand that to keep costs down, most flights are quoted on indirect routes with a layover included. If you prefer to ensure a direct flight, please discuss this with your Travel Advisor. In most cases, if a direct flight is requested and available, additional fees will be assessed by the airlines.

Please also be aware that although airlines will give us general routes, flight numbers and timings, these are not guaranteed until approximately one week prior to travel when final tickets are issued. Airlines reserve the right to make changes to layover cities, timings and flight numbers until final tickets are issued. That said, if we are able to let you know flight details earlier than normal, please understand that these may change up to the time of travel as they are at the discretion of the airlines. The airlines are also responsible for deciding how long layover times will be plus a variety of other factors.

Finally, while we try our best to arrange group seating on all flights where possible, this is on a request basis only and as much as we would like to, it cannot be guaranteed as the process is managed by the individual airline.

## Airline Baggage Limits

Baggage weight and size restrictions vary and are subject to change. Once your flights have been ticketed, please review the airline’s website to determine applicable size and weight restrictions. If these should change after flight confirmation and we are made aware by the airline, we will of course advise you personally. **Please understand that it is your responsibility to allocate appropriate fees to pay for all baggage needs at check-in (each way) and also to be aware of limits for oversized or overweight items.**

## European Ferries – UK & Europe

If traveling by ferry between Europe and the UK, all passengers should be awake and with shoes on (also access to coats in case of inclement weather) 30-minutes before arrival at the port city. All passengers should be in possession of their own passports as well. If arriving into the UK via ferry, the Borders Agency also insists that all passengers disembark the coach for passport inspections.

Groups are only permitted to travel on their booked sailings. In Calais, we generally travel with P&O who offer a specific parking area for wait times but with only minimal facilities for use if groups arrive early. Therefore, when traveling, please consult your bus driver for the best times to ensure an easy transfer as these may vary from what is shown on your itinerary due to current circumstances and/or traffic conditions. All groups should arrive no more than 2-hours prior to their booked sailings.



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## Luggage Handling

Luggage handling is deemed as being able to carry and load your luggage while checking into an airline, boarding a motorcoach, checking into a hotel, etc. All passengers should be able to handle their own luggage independently. Luggage handling fees are not included in the cost of your trip. If you would like to add on luggage handling, please let us know and we will be happy to determine associated costs on your behalf.

## Changes within 30-days of Travel

If for any reason you opt to change or add services that may result in increased fees within 30-days of travel, please be advised that we will require you to pay any required fees via credit card **before** we may implement changes. This may include items such as passenger name changes, additions of activities and/or transportation over the original package, or other changes implemented by you. Please understand that this will only be requested when you request a change. All billing will be authorized by the Trip Leader.

## Waivers

Waivers are required to be signed by every passenger - student/staff/adult/chaperone - for every trip. **Without a signed waiver, you may not travel.** If under the age of 18, waivers will need to be signed by each parent/legal guardian in addition to the student. In addition to our corporate waiver, many activity suppliers also mandate waivers in place prior to participating in the activity. Please check with us to determine if waivers will be required for any of your activities. If they are, these will be emailed to you. Waivers for standard tours are generally signed through our online portal, prior to submitting deposits. Waivers for custom tours may be sent to you prior to travel.

## ESTA/ETA for Groups inbound to the USA / Canada

In addition to ensuring that all passport requirements are met, persons visiting the USA/Canada must apply online for ESTA/ETA prior to travel:

[ELECTRONIC SYSTEM for TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION – USA](#)  
[ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION – Canada](#)

All passengers eligible for travel under the Visa Waiver Program must receive online approval a minimum of 72-hours prior to departure. The Visa Waiver Program offers entry without the need for a visa to travelers from selected countries. Many European passport holders may travel under this program, however **if a different passport is held you will need to check with the proper Embassy about eligibility.** The current list of countries covered can be found on the website links above. Boarding/entry on arrival may be denied if you have not received approval.

Application takes just a few moments; please ensure that you have your passport in hand when logging into the portal. If you get a new passport after receiving approval (lost/stolen/expired) you **MUST** re-apply as the document details will have changed. You will not be able to travel without your approval exactly matching the details shown in your passport.

All passengers must have an approval code (generally a minimum of 72-hours prior to departure but may vary) in order to board the plane. Failure to do so may result in denied boarding and/or entry. An approval does not guarantee entry at Customs & Immigration. **It is up to all groups to ensure that each passenger has completed the form and received the necessary approval before travel.**



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## Passport Questions

We understand that many groups will have passport questions regarding international participants you may have attending your tour. Unfortunately, government regulations change frequently so in order to ensure you have the most up-to-date information, it is best for you to refer parents to a website operated by their home country (their Embassy) for the latest information. Due to the frequent changes, we are not able to advise on this subject directly. If assistance is needed, please contact us and we will be happy to try to locate additional sources of information for you.

## Visits to Milan, Venice, Florence, Athens and other 'Tourist Tax' Cities

If you are on a tour that includes a major European city, please know that most hotels will require additional tourist taxes to be paid. At times, these fees may be waived if you are traveling as a school for educational purposes. Unfortunately, this benefit does not apply to adult groups. To apply for fee waving, we will require a letter written on your school letterhead, showing all passenger names in order to qualify for tax-free tourism. Prior to your trip, you will be sent an example of the required letter to use to ensure you have met all requirements. This will need to be received 30-days prior to travel. If you elect not to submit this, please be advised that you may be required to pay mandated tourism taxes upon arrival.

## Motorcoach Company Requests

If you would like to request the use of a specific motorcoach company, please alert our operations team to this at your very earliest convenience. While we cannot guarantee any specific provider, we can certainly make the request for consideration.

## Seatbelts on Motorcoaches in North & Central America

Please be advised that in the Americas, many motorcoaches do not have seatbelts. If this is a condition of travel, please alert us when booking and we can attempt to source this on your behalf.

## Dietary Requirements

Please be advised that while every effort will be made to meet specific dietary requirements, these may not be guaranteed. Please reconfirm all dietary requirements to your Ambassador upon arrival. Meal providers are generally able to cater to Vegetarian requests however others such as Vegan, Celiac, Organic and religious preference diets generally require that specialty food is brought in by the participant. Unfortunately, dislikes may not be catered for and no discounts are available for those that require specialty foods. Please consult us if you have a specific question regarding airline or ground arrangements, we will be happy to assist in any way we are able. Please review the type of meal service that will be provided during your tour. If you are on a dine-around program, it is always best to be prepared as select meals may not be adequate for all needs.

## Itineraries

Please be advised that your final itinerary will be made available to you approximately 2 weeks prior to travel. If you receive flight changes after this time, this will not be shown on the initial itinerary. Also, please be aware that we will be unable to send any itineraries if we have not received **all required documents** and payments.

## Staff Contacts

Our staff always look forward to serving you! If we may answer any questions or assist in any way, please contact us!



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Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We know you want to minimize any potential issues and/or delays so appreciate your assistance. As always, if we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Kind regards,

*Michele*

Michele Hammock 

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