



**Hellene**  
School Travel

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## SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

We are fully committed to ensuring the safety of your group whilst you are on your tour.

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## Introduction

With over 40 years' experience in teaching and examining in a senior position, coordinating and leading overseas tours, our extensive knowledge of classical sites and venues ensures a high level of competency and customer satisfaction.

Given our extensive experience of organising educational programmes, you can be justifiably reassured that we are fully aware of our responsibilities for providing a safe and secure environment for those, young students, on our educational tours.

We are committed to offering the highest reasonably practicable levels of safety on all our tours. The aim of this document is to set out the policies and procedures implemented by our company to ensure this safety.

We have Public, Products and Tour Operators Liability Insurance.

## Our Safety Management System

We are fully committed to ensuring the safety of your group whilst you are on your school tour and to providing a quality learning experience.

DfES guidelines relating to Health and Safety on educational visits require:

- The LEA or governing body to advise schools to ask tour operators for their safety management system.
- A safety management system should define how a tour operator manages the component parts of the educational visit they are providing, especially with regard to accommodation and travel. We are delighted to advise you that it operates a comprehensive Safety Management System (SMS) and that its procedures and policies are in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the DfES and Local Authorities. Our SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM covers all elements of your tour including your accommodation, transport, visits, emergency procedures, risk assessment guidelines, minimum standards and codes of conduct. Our relevant staff members are trained in carrying out assessments of our suppliers to provide safe accommodation and transport. We ensure that our suppliers comply with EU legislation (if applicable) and national or local government regulations with regards to fire, hygiene and other safety standards.

Signed on behalf of Hellene School Travel Ltd

Director

*Updated 06/10/2020*

## Safety Management System

When booking with Hellene School Travel Ltd you can be secure in the knowledge that we:

- Understand and facilitate the needs of educational travel
- Have effective Safety Management Systems in place, specifically focused on travelling with young students
- Offer fair terms and condition and the best financial security

## 1.0 Safety Policy Mission Statement

The safety of our groups is the single most important responsibility.

We are committed to ensuring that all precautions are taken and all regulations are complied with as far as reasonably possible to provide our customers with the highest possible safety standards throughout our product and at all times.

- We will provide the resources both financial and human to implement the safety policy.
- We will proactively undertake all possible measures to minimise the risk of an accident occurring.
- We will ensure our products and services (in relation to hotels, coach companies and activities) comply where applicable with the current local/national standards as a minimum requirement and maintain this in the relevant supplier files.
- Our personnel training (in-house and by professional bodies) will be sufficient to enable them to carry out appropriate supplier audits.
- Our personnel training will enable staff to competently apply the safety policy.
- We will establish and maintain effective systems of communication with our clients.
- We will keep up to date with safety requirements and practices applicable to the provision of educational tours.
- We will review and update the safety policy as and when appropriate.
- Safety improvements and monitoring is our responsibility and management will help assist to ensure that the safety aspects of all our tours are of the highest importance.

## 2.0 Safety Management System Monitoring and Review

As outlined in section 1 of this policy document, we are committed to all aspects of safety on our school tours.

The Tours Director and Operations Manager review the SMS throughout the year, managing feedback and compliance and making adjustments where necessary. The Operations Manager oversees the management of the system.

Relevant personnel will receive training in the objectives of the Safety Management System.

All records of SMS staff training are held in one central file for reference use of company employees.

Our personnel endeavour to comply with the requirements of the SMS and carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the training provided and within the principles of the SMS.

Our personnel notify the management of any situation that has the potential for serious danger to clients and any noted weaknesses in the SMS.

Our Safety Management Standards are independently assessed and verified by an approved external Health & Safety Consultant.

## 3.0 Management Responsibility

The Tours Director and Operations Manager are responsible for the Safety Management System.

The Operations Manager is responsible for the daily implementation of the Safety Management System and for monitoring the effectiveness of the SMS and providing feedback to the Director and other parties on any perceived risk or area of concern.

The Operations Manager and if necessary the Tours Director will review feedback documentation submitted by Group Leaders, taking remedial action as necessary and ensuring this is implemented.

## 4.0 Accommodation

### 4.1 Accommodation Contract

For all accommodations, we will ensure that an accommodation contract or agent agreement is signed confirming (as a minimum) that the accommodation conforms to local and national fire, safety and hygiene standards and will have current liability insurance cover for the duration of the contract. Confirmation that the contract conditions are still being met will be obtained every three years.

### 4.2 SMS Accommodation Audits

This is an in-depth report, which undertakes to thoroughly audit every area of fire safety, security, hygiene and facilities in general.

Audits are completed by either our staff, local agent or sometimes the hotelier. Where the results indicate areas for concern we will instigate appropriate additional action before making an informed decision whether to use the accommodation. We also undertake a series of random accommodation spot checks.

Following the completion of a Safety Audit, observations will be recorded and recommendations made to the accommodation management where we feel further improvements concerning the level of safety could and should be made.

We record audits in the following categories: High; Acceptable and Unacceptable. If the accommodation falls into the middle category we will make the hotelier aware of the defects at the time of the audit and will follow up in writing. The deficiencies will be evaluated before making a decision whether to use the property. We will remove any accommodation that falls into the Unacceptable category until the deficiencies have been rectified and a further audit has been carried out.

In the extremely rare event of an accommodation overbooking, which leads to a group being re-accommodated in an alternative accommodation we will endeavour to carry out an audit on the new accommodation before the group's arrival but this may not always be possible.

### 4.3 Regularity and Frequency of Audits

All accommodation used frequently will be audited every three years.

All accommodation units that we use on an ad-hoc basis will be audited as frequently as is reasonably possibly.

#### 4.4 Accommodation Booked Through an Agent

We will ensure we have an Agents Contract confirming that hotels which our agents have provided have a current fire certificate or local equivalent, appropriate insurance cover and endeavour to obtain a hygiene certificate or local equivalent and furthermore that they conform to a set of specific safety standards aimed at further improving client safety.

We will also carry out an audit for all accommodations prior to use. This may be completed by the hotelier or our Agent.

We have been and will continue to pro-actively advise and educate our agents of the high importance of safety in all the accommodation units they provide for us. This is communicated via face-to-face meetings during visits, telephone and e-mail.

In the extremely rare event of an accommodation overbooking, which leads to a group being re-accommodated in an alternative accommodation we will endeavour to carry out an audit on the new accommodation before the group's arrival but this may not always be possible.

#### 4.5 Accommodation Requested Directly by a Client

No accommodation will be provided if it has been audited by us and is considered unsafe. If the requested accommodation has never been used before, we would ask the manager of the hotel to complete a standard audit form (copies are available on request). The audit will be analysed by a trained in-house auditor and an appropriate H&S score given to enable all concerned to make an informed decision. In the event that the hotel manager refuses or fails to complete the audit, we will inform the client and it will be the client's decision whether to progress with accommodation booking.

#### 5.0 Coach Safety Management

We consider travel safety to be of paramount importance.

Coach travel in the UK is regulated by the Department of Transport. An operator licence is only issued after the coach company has met the legislative requirements set out by the DfT. DfT Traffic Commissioners will ensure that coaches are fully maintained and that the operator/licensee follows the rules covering speed limits, insurance of vehicles and drivers' hours.

We will hire coaches from well-established, reliable companies. We will endeavour to select coach operators who belong to recognised industry bodies such as the Confederation of Passenger Transport CPT, Guild of British Coach Operators or are Coach Marque accredited operators. To this end we have a list of preferred coach suppliers on a "regular coach list". The list includes companies that we envisage using for more than 5 times in a year.

All coach companies used will sign a contract in which they confirm that they comply with all national, local, trade and other laws. The contract will also stipulate a set of safety standards regarding driver's providing clients with a safety pre-departure talk, driver's hours, driver vetting (ensuring drivers have no criminal record or detrimental employment record), insurance cover and vehicle age.

## 5.1 SMS British Coach Safety Audit

Our audits will request that coach companies supply information under the following headings:

- Operating license
- Maintenance regimes and records
- Enforcement records
- Records of drivers' qualifications
- Systems for monitoring drivers competence and license
- Vetting of drivers for suitability of working with children i.e. CRB
- System for ensuring drivers are fully aware of drivers' hour's regulations.
- Drivers' health check records
- Contingency plans in the event of coach breakdown
- Details of breakdown organisations to which the company belongs
- A 24 hour contact number

## 5.2 Seat Belts

Seat belts will be available for all pupils on British coaches. The regulation regarding seat belts is a British regulation; this does not apply to foreign coaches although efforts are made to ensure European Coaches are also fitted with seat belts.

## 5.3 Drivers' Hours Regulations

All itineraries are completed taking into consideration EU drivers' hours regulations.

## 5.4 Breakdown

In the event of a mechanical breakdown or driver illness we reserve the right to find the best available alternative. In the event of a coach breakdown the priority will be to move clients to a place of safety. Coach operators have agreements with overseas repair services. They will be called to diagnose and complete the repair. If a delay is to be protracted then an alternative vehicle will be supplied. We will provide assistance where necessary, 24 hours a day. Please note it is possible this vehicle will not be supplied from an audited company in view of the extenuating circumstances. Where a continental vehicle is used, it may not have seat belts, as the regulation regarding seat belts is a British regulation.

## 5.5 Sub Contracting

It is part of the contractual agreement with our coach companies that they do not sub contract to other companies unless there has been an agreement in advance to this arrangement.

## 5.6 Coach Company Requested by a Client

We are happy to provide a coach company specifically requested by a client if the said coach company provides information of an acceptable standard. Our in-house auditor will review the information given in documentation to enable all concerned to make an informed decision.

## 5.7 Overseas Coach Companies

We normally hire non-UK coach companies through a local agent.

Our agents are requested to sign a contract in which they confirm that the companies they select comply with all applicable national, local, trade or other laws, regulations, rules and codes of practice. The coach company provided by the agent will be required to provide evidence that it complies with regulations as stated above.

It must be noted that seat belts are not a legal requirement for foreign coaches however on most occasions we ensure our overseas coaches have seat belts included to ensure safety of our customers.

## 6.0 Public Transport

The appropriate authority in each country regulates public transport and we are unable to implement any additional measures.

## 7.0 Ferries/Eurotunnel

Our cross channel operator partners comply with independently set safety standards, which, because of their technical nature, it is not possible for us to audit. We do, however, liaise very closely with all our operators annually to try to improve our clients' safety during their channel crossing.

## 8.0 Airlines

The Department of Transport & the Civil Aviation Authority regulate all air transport from the UK. Therefore, it is not possible for us to audit or implement additional safety measures. Similarly, airlines comply with independently set safety standards, which, because of their technical nature, it is not possible for us to audit. The laws and regulations of the country in question also govern flights originating outside of the UK.

## 9.0 Rail Transportation (including Eurostar)

Rail transport complies with the independently set safety standards of the countries through which the train travels. It is, therefore, not possible for us to audit rail transport.

## 10.0 Itinerary/Excursion Risk Assessment

The majority of attractions visited by groups as part of our programmes are open to the public. Groups who visit these attractions do so at their own risk. Site operators are responsible for the Health and Safety of all their visitors, including our clients. However, we will make reasonable effort to obtain from suppliers:

- Evidence that health and safety has been evaluated.
- An outline of any potential remaining risks the supplier wishes to bring to the group's attention.

Where our local agent arranges a visitor excursion, they will sign a contract agreeing to use the same standards as shown above.

All visits featured by us are categorised according to the risk element. We monitor all comment relating to visits and excursions on our quality control questionnaires and "Accident, Incident & Near Miss" reports. If a particular visit or excursion were to receive negative feedback regarding health and safety then we will remove the visit or excursion from our programme and carry out an investigation. We would not reinstate the visit until we are happy that the defects have been rectified and evidence provided.

## 10.1 Quality of Learning Provision Standards

We aim to facilitate teacher to help them deliver a good learning experience for their students. In consultation with the teacher we will help to plan a bespoke programme or offer a menu of visits for the leader to choose from to help enrich the syllabus. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to judge whether the visit is suitable for his/her students' particular key stage ability.

## 10.2 Tour itineraries and pre-tour information

We offer tour information via the website i.e. "Useful booking guide" and sample itineraries. Additionally, a personal consultant will discuss the client's needs during the initial call and will continue to liaise with the client throughout the booking/planning procedure. The Group Leader will be sent relevant travel documentation, emergency contact numbers, a destination guidebook, local maps and directions to pre-booked visits. Additionally, clients will be given archaeological site notes, offering safety guidance.

A quality control system is in place to ensure itineraries are sent to clients and suppliers in good time to ensure that any changes, if necessary can be made. The client's personal tour consultant will contact the client before the departure date to talk through the itinerary in detail – to ensure that the client is fully aware of what will happen during the tour and has the contact details. Our tour coordinators who all have a basic understanding of drivers' hours regulations

prepare itineraries. If there are any queries relating to drivers' hours, itineraries are submitted to the coach company for checking prior to dispatch to clients.

We hold a weekly quality control meeting. During the meeting the Operations Manager or Director will check all tour itineraries that are due to depart the following week to ensure that the correct information is given (Inc. Emergency contacts) and all elements of the tour have been confirmed.

### 10.3 Post Tour Evaluation

All clients are provided with a Quality Control Questionnaire, which we request are completed and returned. The Operations Manager and if necessary the Director will review all feedback. If clients highlight areas of concern, these are investigated immediately and appropriate action is taken. In addition, we endeavour to discuss the outcome of the client's tour in detail on his/her return.

### 11.0 Emergency Information

We have in place emergency procedures to follow in the event of a serious incident.

We provide party leaders, coach drivers and overseas agents with a 24 hours emergency contact number to be used when groups are on tour, which appears on the cover sheet of each itinerary.

In most destinations we have local representatives who are able to provide on-the-spot assistance.

Reports of serious incidents are used subsequently to review safety procedures.

### 12.0 Serious Incidents

To ensure that we deal with any serious incidents in the most efficient and professional manner possible, we have formalised our emergency procedures into a manual for internal office use, which sets out clearly all actions to be taken in the event of a serious incident.

#### 12.1 Accident Investigation

All accidents will be reported and subsequently investigated. Records are kept of all incidents. Information contained in the report will be used to establish the cause or causes and to implement any remedial action necessary.

Accident reports will minimally contain the following:

- Date, time and place of the accident.
- The parties involved.
- Witness.
- Events leading up to the accident.

- Injury or damage sustained to the parties involved.
- Any immediate or underlying causes.
- Emergency action taken at the time of the accident.
- Suggested further remedial action.

## 12.2 'Near Misses'

Clients and staff are encouraged to complete an accident report form in the event an incident that could have, potentially resulted in a serious incident or accident. As with serious incidents or accidents themselves, this information is used to review existing Health and Safety practice.

## 13.0 Inspection visits

Inspection visits are available to group leaders who have a confirmed booking with us.

We offer group leaders who have confirmed a booking the opportunity to visit their selected destinations and inspect their hotel. We will pay for two night's bed and breakfast accommodation for two people in a twin room. The client is asked to pay his or her own travel costs.

## 14.0 Staff training

All staff members have undertaken or will undertake an auditor-training course, enabling them to carry out safety audits.