

First Travel Solutions Limited.

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Group Leader Booking Guide

Essential Information

Contents:

- **Introduction**
- **What Happens When**
- **Provisional Booking**
- **Confirm Your Booking**
- **Payments Schedule**
- **Safety & Financial Security**
- **In An Emergency**
- **Medical Conditions & Dietary Requirements**
- **Final Preparation**
- **Rooming Plans**
- **Your Travel Arrangements & Responsibilities**
- **Making Changes**
- **While You're Away**
- **Dealing With Problems**
- **Welcome Home!**

1. Introduction

This guide is intended to help you through each stage of the booking process from your initial enquiry through to the delivery of your trip, answering frequently asked questions. If you have any questions which are not covered in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact the team at First Education & School Travel on **0203 467 2002**.

2. What Happens & When?

Provisional Booking:

Any provisional booking will be held without obligation for a maximum of 10 days from the date specified on your provisional booking email advice. Please advise us as soon as possible if you no longer require us to provisionally hold the dates for you as we will then be able to make these available to other groups. When you make a provisional booking you will receive an email confirming the details, dates and prices discussed.

Confirming Your Booking:

To confirm your booking all you need to do is send us an email to confirm the offer and then return your completed booking form and 10% holding deposit payment to us within 10 days of confirming your provisional booking.

The Payment Schedule:

We will send a VAT invoice to you at each stage of the booking when deposits become due.

Holding Deposit: Initially you will make a holding deposit payment of 10% on confirmation of your booking with First Education & School Travel. This applies to all bookings taking place more than six months ahead.

The Secondary Deposit: A secondary deposit of 25% is due six months prior to your visit, please return the invoice with your payment by the due date shown.

The Final Balance payment: Final payment becomes due eight weeks prior to departure. We will ask for your **final** numbers at this stage and invoice you based on the group numbers confirmed. Please return the invoice with your payment by the due date shown.

3. Financial Security

When you book your school trip with First Education & School Travel you can be assured that your group's payments are kept in safe hands. We are a fully bonded school tour operator and work to a scheme whereby all monies paid by the group are held in trust until the agreed services have been delivered, providing peace of mind and ensuring your payments are safe from risk of any financial failure.

4. Health & Safety

A clear and rigorous approach to Health & Safety:

We constantly monitor and review our processes to ensure that we offer the safest possible visits for groups. Our strict compliance processes cover all aspects of trip planning. These include provision of DfT compliant transport, safe & secure accommodation, fire safety management, appropriate liability insurance cover plus detailed site & activity risk assessments. We also provide an opportunity for staff to carry out a **preliminary visit** to help group leaders prepare for the trip.

5. In an Emergency

Emergency Contact Information:

During the booking process you will be asked to provide us with the contact details for the group leader responsible for your trip. We will keep this information to use in case of emergency. We will also provide you with a direct contact number so that you can contact us during your visit **24 hours a day**, should the need arise.

6. Medical Conditions & Dietary Requirements

We will send you a **dietary/medical information** form, which you will need to complete and return to us prior to your visit, this will be passed to the on-site staff to ensure that they are fully aware of any special requirements. If there are any late changes or new medical conditions, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can advise the venue. It is vital that you ask parents to inform you if their child suffers from a medical condition or dietary allergy that will need special attention.

7. Final Preparations

Rooming Plans

We will send a rooming list template prior to your visit, please complete the plan and return this at least 2 weeks prior to your trip. Please be aware that the centre may need to change these arrangements at short notice.

8. Your Travel Arrangements and Responsibilities

First Education & School Travel is responsible for ensuring the following:

- Providing services that meet Department for Education and industry best practice (particularly section 6, Planning Transport (DfE – Gov website - School Visits)
- Ensuring all travel arrangements are made and confirmed in writing with the group in advance
- The vehicle provider and drivers are competent to drive the proposed vehicle
- The vehicle has been, and is properly maintained at the time of the journey and that the vehicle will be suitable for the nature of the visit
- The chosen operator and First Education & School Travel will carry appropriate insurance cover
- The vehicle will have appropriate fitted seatbelts and will comply with Department for Transport legislation
- Providing alternative and suitable transport in the event of any breakdown

Group Leaders are responsible for the following:

- Having the group ready to depart on time. Should a group miss a scheduled service due to poor punctuality or for any other reason outside of the control of the vehicle operator then any additional costs will be borne by the group and not by First Education & School Travel or the operator.
- For Risk Assessing the journey to and from the coach or rail pick up and drop off points
- For the safety and behaviour of pupils whilst waiting at pick-up or drop-off points and when getting on or off transport.
- Group Leaders are also responsible for the safety of the group when crossing roads or areas used by vehicles prior to boarding and post alighting of transport.
- For administering First Aid to any members of their group
- Making the group aware of the safety rules and expected standards of behaviour. Any charge for proven vandalism of vehicles will be passed to the group.

- For checking that all members of their group are wearing seatbelts
- Responsible for carrying out **ALL** headcounts for all legs of the journeys
- Having a strong presence at the pick up or drop off sites and during the travel to ensure the appropriate behaviour and effective pastoral care of their group
- Clearing up any mess as a result of travel sickness. Coach companies may charge for any additional cleaning required as a result. This charge will be passed on to the group.

Consideration should also be given as whether the group should wear a visible or recognisable article of clothing to ensure easy identification e.g.: cap, or armband.

Pupils or group participants also have responsibilities:

- All students/group participants must follow Health & Safety instructions.
- All students/group participants should behave with a concern for the safety of themselves and others
- All Students (or their parents/guardians) should ensure that School Group Leaders are made aware of any health, dietary or medical conditions prior to the course.

Note: First Education & School Travel will not take responsibility or cover additional costs that are incurred through a group being asked to leave any form of transport due to behaviour or other disciplinary matters.

Location of Supervisory Adults

Group leaders and staff are advised to sit adjacent to emergency exits. This is for safety purposes to ensure pupils cannot access the emergency exits during the journey. This practice also ensures staff are in a position to assist in the event of an emergency evacuation.

8. Making Changes to your booking

Amending Group Numbers

You can change your group numbers by up to 10% of your original numbers at any time **up until 90 days** prior to your trip taking place without penalty. Please note that there is a maximum variation in numbers up to this point of 10% allowed; this is a variation between the original group numbers booked and those which actually arrive. Any reduction in numbers made after this point will still be chargeable. Note: should your numbers reduce drastically, this may have an impact on the package price quoted and subsequently increase costs for the remaining participants. Please ensure you contact us **prior** to accepting any **additional group members** onto the trip as we will need to check availability at the centre and ensure that any additional numbers do not adversely affect the travel arrangements.

9. Cancellations

Should it be necessary for you to cancel your booking, please inform us, in writing, as soon as possible. Cancellation is effective from the date your letter is received at our offices and may be subject to cancellation charges as follows:

The holding deposit and second deposit payments are automatically forfeit if the booking is cancelled by the customer for whatever reason. If cancellation is made less than 28 days prior to the start of the trip, whether deliberately or not, the balance fee must be paid in full, a condition which is accepted when the booking is confirmed (i.e. when a signed booking form and holding deposit are received by First Education & School Travel).

10. While You're Away

Group Safety Advice

- Free time is the most common time for minor injuries to occur
- Take a list of home contact details for every student
- Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged
- Take a charger and adapter with you
- Ensure Group Leaders are aware of the emergency exit routes and the means of raising an alarm
- Ensure students are aware of which rooms group leaders occupy in case they need to contact you
- Keep a room list handy in your own room.

11. Dealing With Problems

Travel Delays & Breakdowns

We will arrange for your vehicle to arrive at school 15 minutes prior to the agreed departure time. This provides time to load luggage and to make the necessary headcounts. If for any reason the vehicle has not arrived by the agreed departure time, the fastest way to get information is to call the contact number you will find on the travel confirmation letter.

All our vehicles are tracked to ensure full support. Should a vehicle breakdown the driver will take the necessary action. As soon as we are made aware of any problem, a back up vehicle will be despatched and will aim to get to you within an hour. Note: Please follow the advice of any official and/or driver e.g. If a breakdown occurs on a motorway, where safe to do so, RoSPA's advice is to move your group off the coach and carriageway.

If you are delayed en-route due to traffic congestion or other minor delays, don't worry, our partners are very flexible and will deal with small changes to arrival times and will reschedule the itinerary to reduce any impact on time available.

If the delay threatens to significantly affect your plans, please contact your Education Visits Advisor and they will advise the centre and ensure your activities are re-scheduled

The majority of problems can be resolved quickly by talking to the driver or manager on-site. In the rare event of continued dissatisfaction call your Education Visits Advisor and they will address the problem. Do let us know of any issues by returning the Group Feedback Form, which will be emailed to you on your return

12. Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, please speak to a staff member at the centre who will then take the appropriate action following clear and documented policies and practices.

13. Accidental Damage

In the event of any damage or breakages during your visit you will be advised by the Centre Manager of the nature and cost of fixing/replacement if this is deemed appropriate. An invoice will be sent by the centre to school and made for the group leaders' attention. This invoice should be paid direct to the centre.

14. Welcome Back!

Feedback

As part of our continuing mission to improve the service we provide, we would be grateful if you could complete the Group Feedback Form on your return. Your comments, based on the whole of your visit, are an important part of our dedication to improve your residential visit experience.

For any further information, please call **0203 467 2003**

Or contact:

The Education & School Travel Team

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