



## Travelling with Secondary School Students on Overseas Learning Trips

There are simple ways of setting secondary school students up for successful school based overseas learning trips. What follows is a list of some of these ways:

- Decide on the purpose of the overseas learning trip<sup>1</sup>.
- Have an initial information sharing meeting. The basic purpose of this first meeting is to publicize the availability of the trip, and to get an early indication of interest. Distribute the trip itinerary.
- Conduct parent meetings explaining all details of the trip.
- Parent, teenagers and adult meeting discussing the specifics of the trip in more detail.
- If emergencies from home arise during trip, request parents contact adults accompanying students so the adult can give news to the student.
- Ensure only licensed, professional guides, willing to work alongside with teenagers are employed.
- Conduct pre-trip study to help prepare students for overseas learning tour. Read books such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* for Amsterdam. Watch movies such as *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* for Assisi.
- Learn a few phrases in the local language so you can signal your need for help, the police, or a doctor etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Possible Purposes include: Help students develop independence, self-reliance, self-responsibility and interdependence; For students to explore domestic and foreign destinations, learning about the history, government, economy and culture of the areas they visit; Help students develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

- Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.
- Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and relevant visas.
- Take two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, and the credit cards that you plan to take with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.
- Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.
- School staff accompanying trip - make record each student's medical history and have this easily accessible.
- Request students take some comfortable shoes and clothing suitable for destination climate.
- Refrain from wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive jewellery and do not carry excessive amounts of money or unnecessary credit cards.
- Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary for your trip and plan a place or places to conceal them. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.
- Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand.
- Bring two pairs of comfortable, water-resistant shoes, rain gear, and an umbrella;
- Bring clothes that are warm enough for unusually cold and windy weather in case you encounter it on your trip;
- Wear a wristwatch to make sure you're on time for your various pick-ups and departures.
- Let students take responsibility for their own luggage.
- Encourage students to take their own camera to take photographs.
- Mark camera in some distinctive way.

- If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Take any medicines needed in carry-on luggage.
- Check your credit card is accepted in the country you are visiting - in some countries you may not be able to use any credit cards.
- When packing, include any medications and other medical supplies you use on a daily basis because they may be hard to find in another country if you run out.
- To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labelled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug.
- Packing an over-the-counter pain medication and diarrhoea medication is also a good idea.
- Be sure to carry enough small change in local currency to buy snacks, make phone calls and use public toilets.
- Stay in touch with home. Free email account (Hotmail and Yahoo! Mail are good bets) and visits to cyber cafés.
- Ensure that the mobile phone system students are linked with in each country is the most cost effective service for them.
- Ensure students have some financial independence - set a budget for them to follow.
- Be flexible with itinerary and be prepared to change it.
- Intersperse museum tours with fun activities or stops.
- Plan for free time, unsupervised, but within a defined range--a shopping mall, maybe--for a short time everyday or as often as you can spare the time.
- Plan frequent rest stops. If you're driving, break up your trip so your kids can stretch and run around to blow off some pent-up energy.
- Schedule daily physical exercise for students.
- Encourage students to get adequate sleep. Suggest they pack earplugs in case they are sharing room with someone who snores.
- Avoid museums on their weekly free days when they're most crowded.

- Wear the shoulder strap of handbag bag across chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
- Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.
- Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest embassy or consulate.
- Keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations and hospitals.
- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets. Try not to travel alone at night.
- Do not accept food or drink from strangers.
- Do not accept packages from strangers.
- Pay close attention to your guide, when you're getting off the bus, when your guide is telling you about exactly where and when you'll be getting back on.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.
- Remain friendly but be cautious about discussing personal matters, your itinerary or program with strangers.
- Watch for people following you / observing your comings and goings.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.
- Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch.
- Deal only with authorized agents when exchanging money or purchasing.
- Encourage students to keep a travel diary of their travel adventures - have different students take responsibility for the diary on different days.
- Pick economy stores in your destination and allow students to shop.
- Explain to students what the behaviour expectations are. Engage in a role discussion - my role as adult is / is not. My role as student is / is not

- Set ground rules for curfews and discuss safety concerns that will allow for independence and freedom while still providing limitations and safety.
- Establish travel rituals for predictability e.g., planning the day talk at the beginning of each day after breakfast.
- Offer choices in activities and provide positive behaviour specific feedback when students work with behaviour expectations.
- Explain WHY as part of your decisions instead of just "BECAUSE I SAY SO".
- Take the time to LISTEN to their concerns without minimizing them.
- Try and maintain a calm demeanour when conflicts occur.
- Use a buddy system so that each student links with another student. Make sure that both students have phone numbers to send SMS to etc.
- Review the day's plan at breakfast.
- Debriefing each day in the evening.
- Map out your route and ask students to help navigate.
- Provide a map - let them keep track of where you are, how many km to go, how many you have already travelled - keep a log.
- If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind or under a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/abroad\\_pub\\_safetrip.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/abroad_pub_safetrip.html)