STEM STUDY TOURS
TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

Teacher's Guide for Educational Travel

2027



INSPIRATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

HAMMOCK EXPEDITIONS

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A warm welcome to our valued teachers!

Thank you for choosing STEM Study Tours for your educational travel program. We know that leading a group of students is an exciting opportunity, but it also comes with considerable planning and responsibility. Our goal is to make that process as smooth as possible and to support you every step of the way.

This guide has been created as your complete reference for planning, preparing for, and leading your educational tour. Inside, you'll find important information about travel documents, insurance, flights and luggage, student supervision, accommodations, meals, health and safety, passports, your itinerary, your Tour Director, and many of the situations that may arise before and during your trip.

Some of the information is detailed, and that is intentional. Over the years, we have learned that the better prepared you are before departure, the easier it is to manage the unexpected along the way. We have included practical information, helpful reminders, and best practices based on our experience working with school groups around the world.

We encourage you to read through this guide before you travel and keep it accessible throughout your tour. Think of it as your go-to resource whenever you have a question before departure or while you are away. Of course, no guide can anticipate every situation. If you ever have a question or need assistance, our team is here to help. You need only to ask.

Thank you for trusting us with your students and your educational travel experience. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with you and look forward to helping you create an extraordinary learning experience outside the classroom.

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Before You Travel

As a Trip Leader, much of your work takes place long before your group leaves home. Good preparation can make an enormous difference once your tour begins, helping your group move smoothly through airports, hotels, activities and unexpected situations along the way.

The following information will help you prepare your students, families and leadership team for travel. We encourage you to work through these items well in advance of departure and return to this section as your travel date approaches.



Destination Preparation

Preparing students and families for the destination is an important part of getting your group ready to travel. Pre-departure meetings are a good opportunity to review the itinerary, introduce the places your group will visit, discuss local customs and cultural expectations, and help students understand what they may experience along the way.

> **TEACHER TIP | Let Students Lead the Learning**
> Divide students into small teams and assign each a destination, activity, site or cultural topic to research and present before departure. Ideas might include customs and etiquette, history, local foods, language basics or activities included in the itinerary.

As departure approaches, review the anticipated weather and conditions for each destination on your itinerary. Encourage travelers to pack for the activities, climate and cultural settings they are likely to encounter, while keeping in mind that weather can change unexpectedly.

Money & Payment Methods

Before departure, make sure travelers understand how they will access and use money at the destination. Payment options vary by country and location, so it is helpful to plan for more than one method of payment and to avoid relying entirely on cash or a single card.

Currency & Cash

Before travel, make sure students understand what currency they will be using and have a basic sense of its value compared with their home currency. In many destinations, credit and debit cards are widely accepted and ATMs provide convenient access to local currency. Travelers should still have access to a reasonable amount of cash for smaller purchases or situations where cards may not be accepted.

TEACHER TIP | Turn Currency into a Math Lesson

Before departure, have students research the currency used at your destination and the current exchange rate. Give them a sample travel budget and ask them to convert prices between their home currency and the destination currency, compare the cost of everyday purchases, or calculate how much local currency they would receive for a set amount of their home currency. For older students, extend the activity by exploring how changes in exchange rates could affect their spending money or travel budget.

Credit & Debit Cards

Travelers planning to use a credit or debit card should confirm, when traveling internationally, that their card can be used at the destination and whether any foreign transaction or other fees may apply. It is also wise to travel with more than one method of payment in case a card is lost, declined or temporarily unavailable.

Trip Leaders should have access to a physical credit card with sufficient available credit while traveling. Some hotels, equipment-rental companies, activity providers or other suppliers may require a card to be presented for a security deposit or incidental charges. A card number, photograph of a card or digital wallet may not be accepted in place of the physical card.

If traveling with a school-issued or corporate credit card, verify before departure that the Trip Leader is authorized to use the card and that the name associated with the card will not create a problem when identification is requested. A card issued only in the school's or organization's name may not be accepted by some suppliers when the person presenting the card cannot demonstrate that they are the authorized cardholder.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Check Your Card Before You Travel

A physical card is not always enough. School-issued or corporate cards can create difficulties if the name on the card does not correspond with the person presenting it. Before departure, confirm with your school and card issuer that the Trip Leader is authorized to use the card while traveling, particularly internationally. The Trip Leader should also have access to an alternative method of payment in case the card cannot be accepted.

Phones & Connectivity

Mobile phones can be valuable tools while traveling, providing access to communication, maps, travel information, translation tools and other useful resources. Before departure, travelers should understand how their mobile service will work at the destination and what charges may apply, particularly when traveling internationally.

For international travel, travelers should check with their mobile provider before departure to understand available international plans, roaming charges and data options. Depending on the device and destination, travelers may also choose to use Wi-Fi or other connectivity options rather than their normal cellular service.

Students should understand that using mobile data, making calls or sending messages while abroad may result in additional charges, depending on their service plan. Families should determine the most appropriate arrangement for their student before travel.

Trip Leaders should also establish clear expectations for student phone use before departure. Phones can be helpful during travel, but they should not distract students from activities, learning experiences, group instructions or interaction with the people and places around them.

TEACHER TIP | Set Phone Expectations Before Departure

Discuss phone expectations with students and families before the trip begins. Consider when phones may be used, when they should be put away, how students will communicate with their Trip Leader or chaperone, and what students should do if they become separated from the group.

Health, Medications & Important Documents

Good preparation for health and medical needs is an important part of group travel. Before departure, Trip Leaders should ensure that required student health information, medical authorizations and emergency contact information have been collected in accordance with school requirements and are readily accessible while traveling.

Medical & Emergency Information

Trip Leaders should travel with the appropriate medical release or authorization documentation for each student, along with current emergency contact information and any other health documentation required by the school. This information should be kept secure but accessible in the event it is needed during the tour.

Review the information before departure so that the Trip Leader and designated chaperones are aware of any relevant medical needs, allergies or other considerations disclosed for the students in their care.

Prescription Medications

Students who require prescription medication should bring a sufficient supply for the full duration of the trip. Essential medication should be carried in carry-on luggage rather than checked baggage and transported in accordance with applicable destination and transportation requirements.

Before departure, the school should establish how student medications will be managed during the tour, including whether students are permitted to carry and administer their own medication or whether medication must remain in the care of a Trip Leader or designated chaperone.

Health Preparation

Families should address individual health needs with a qualified healthcare provider before travel, particularly when a traveler has an existing medical condition or when the itinerary involves destinations or activities that may require additional health preparation.

For international travel, travelers and families should review current destination-specific health information well in advance of departure, including any recommended or required immunizations and current travel health notices. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travelers' Health website provides destination-specific health guidance and current Travel Health Notices. Travelers outside the United States may also wish to consult the appropriate public-health or travel-health authority in their home country.

Any questions about vaccinations, medications or individual health concerns should be discussed with a qualified healthcare provider.

Group First-Aid Supplies

Trip Leaders should consider carrying a basic group first-aid kit in accordance with their school's policies and trip guidelines. Appropriate supplies may include basic first-aid materials, hand sanitizer, sunscreen and insect repellent, depending on the destination and activities planned.

Any medications carried for group use should be handled in accordance with school policies and applicable requirements. Trip Leaders should also keep relevant travel and health insurance information readily accessible.

Glasses, Contact Lenses & Personal Health Supplies

Travelers who wear prescription glasses or contact lenses should bring the supplies they will need for the duration of the tour and consider carrying a backup pair of glasses when possible. Travelers should also bring any personal health supplies they regularly require rather than assuming the same products or brands will be readily available at the destination.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Keep Medical Information Accessible

In an unexpected medical situation, important information should not be buried in luggage or difficult to locate. Trip Leaders should know where required medical authorizations, emergency contacts and relevant student health information are stored and be able to access them when needed.

Passports & Entry Requirements

For international travel, every traveler must have the documentation required for their individual circumstances and destination. Requirements can vary based on nationality, passport held, destination, length and purpose of travel, and countries transited along the way. Entry requirements may include a valid passport, visa, electronic travel authorization or other documentation.

Passport Validity

Families should check passport validity well in advance of departure. Some destinations require passports to remain valid beyond the dates of travel, so a passport that has not yet expired may still fail to meet a destination's entry requirements. For example, some countries require at least six months of remaining passport validity. Travelers needing a new or renewed passport should begin the process as early as possible rather than waiting until shortly before departure.

Visas & Travel Authorizations

Depending on the traveler's nationality and destination, a visa or electronic travel authorization may be required. Requirements should also be checked for countries the group will transit through, even when those countries are not the final destination.

Because entry requirements are specific to the individual traveler and can change, families should verify requirements using official government sources or other authoritative travel-document resources. The IATA Travel Centre, for example, provides passport, visa and health requirements based on a traveler's personal details and itinerary and draws its information from official sources worldwide.

Traveling with Minors

International travel with minors may require additional documentation, particularly when a student is traveling without a parent or legal guardian. Requirements vary by destination and traveler circumstances, so families and schools should confirm what documentation is required well before departure. Most all guidance notes that travel with children without one or both parents may require documentation relating to custody or parental permission.

Before Departure

Trip Leaders should make sure all required travel documents have been addressed before the group leaves for the airport. Each traveler should have the original documents required for travel, and copies of important travel documents should be prepared in advance and stored separately from the originals.



Packing, Luggage & Electrical Items

Packing expectations should be communicated to students and families well before departure. Encourage travelers to pack practically for the itinerary and to bring only what they can comfortably manage themselves. Students should understand that they are responsible for carrying and keeping track of their own luggage throughout the tour.

Encourage families to review the itinerary carefully when helping students pack. Clothing and footwear should be appropriate for the activities, climate and cultural settings the group is likely to encounter. Comfortable walking shoes are particularly important on programs involving significant time on foot. For winter destinations, students may need appropriate winter footwear or snow boots rather than relying solely on athletic shoes.

Depending on the destination and itinerary, students may also need items such as rain protection, sunscreen, insect repellent, swimwear, appropriate clothing for religious or cultural sites, or specialized items required for particular activities.

Luggage Allowances

Before departure, review the baggage allowance provided for your group and communicate it clearly to students and families. Allowances can vary by airline, routing and ticket type, particularly when an itinerary includes multiple flights.

TEACHER TIP | Weigh Before You Go

Encourage students to weigh their packed suitcase before leaving home, rather than discovering at the airport that it exceeds the baggage allowance and may incur additional fees. Travelers should also leave some room in both the weight and space of their luggage for souvenirs or other items they may acquire during the tour. No luggage scale? A simple option is to weigh yourself on a household scale, then weigh yourself again while holding the suitcase. Subtract your weight from the combined weight to estimate the weight of the suitcase.

Encourage students to stay comfortably within the permitted limits rather than packing to the absolute maximum. Overweight or oversized luggage may result in additional charges and can be difficult to manage as the group moves between airports, hotels and destinations.

Carry-On Essentials

Remind travelers that important or difficult-to-replace items should be kept in their carry-on luggage rather than in checked baggage. This includes passports and required travel documents, essential medications, valuables and other items that may be needed if checked luggage is delayed.

Students should also understand the importance of keeping their carry-on organized and complying with applicable airline and security restrictions for liquids, prohibited items and other regulated contents.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Pack for a Delay

Checked luggage does not always arrive when the traveler does. Encourage students to keep **essential medications, travel documents and valuables in their carry-on luggage**, along with a small number of basic necessities that would help them manage if their checked luggage is temporarily delayed.

Electrical Items

For international travel, remind students and families that electrical outlets and voltage may differ from those used at home. Travelers should determine what plug adaptors or other equipment they will need for each destination included in the itinerary.

It is important to understand that a plug adaptor and a voltage converter are not necessarily the same thing. An adaptor allows a plug to fit a differently shaped outlet, while voltage compatibility depends on the individual device. Travelers should check their electronics and chargers before departure to ensure they are suitable for use at the destination.

Encourage families to obtain any required adaptors or other electrical accessories before departure, rather than relying on finding appropriate equipment after arrival.

Final Group Preparation

In the final days before departure, take time to review the practical details that will help your group begin the tour smoothly. Confirm that passenger information is accurate and that any required forms, waivers or activity documentation have been completed.

Some activities, equipment rentals or suppliers may require participants to complete a waiver, release or other acknowledgement before taking part. Review any requirements provided for your program and make sure required forms are completed before departure whenever possible. If you are unsure whether a particular activity requires additional documentation, please contact us.

Make sure students and families have received the final departure information, including where and when the group should meet, what travelers should have readily accessible, and any last-minute instructions. Any changes to the traveling group should be communicated as soon as possible, as late additions or changes may affect existing arrangements and could result in additional costs.

Before departure, organize students into their assigned chaperone groups and make sure every adult knows which students are under their supervision. Students should also know which Trip Leader or chaperone they should report to throughout the tour.

Consider how members of the group will be easily identified when moving through airports, busy attractions or other crowded locations. Matching school shirts, program shirts, lanyards or another simple identifying item can make it easier to recognize members of the group without requiring everyone to dress identically throughout the tour.



Travel Dress Code

Students represent their school while traveling, and appropriate dress is an important part of being prepared for the different activities, environments and cultural settings included in the tour. Trip Leaders should discuss clothing expectations with students and families before departure so that everyone understands what may be appropriate throughout the program.

Dress for the Activity

Students should bring clothing and footwear appropriate for the activities included in the itinerary. Some programs may involve considerable walking, outdoor activities, laboratories, workshops, field experiences or other settings where appropriate footwear or clothing is important for comfort or safety. Trip Leaders should review the itinerary in advance and make students aware of any activities requiring specific clothing, footwear or protective items.

Cultural & Site Considerations

Some destinations and sites may have expectations regarding dress. Religious sites, cultural institutions, schools, businesses and other venues may require or expect visitors to dress more conservatively or professionally. Students should be prepared to respect local customs and any dress requirements communicated for a particular visit. When appropriate, carrying a lightweight layer or other simple covering can provide flexibility during the day.

School Expectations

The school's own dress and behavior policies remain applicable during the tour. Trip Leaders should communicate any school-specific expectations before departure and address inappropriate clothing in accordance with school policy.

Clothing displaying offensive language, images or messages should not be worn during the tour. Students should also understand that clothing appropriate for free time or recreational activities may not necessarily be appropriate for every scheduled visit.

TEACHER TIP | Review the Itinerary Together

Before departure, walk students through the itinerary and ask them to identify days that may require something different from their usual travel clothing, such as comfortable walking shoes, outdoor clothing, professional attire, modest clothing for cultural or religious sites, or activity-specific footwear. This helps students understand that "dress appropriately" can mean something different from one day of the tour to the next.

Travel Protection / Insurance

Travel insurance is mandatory for every traveler participating in a STEM Study Tours program. All students, Trip Leaders, chaperones and other travelers must have appropriate travel insurance in place for the duration of their program. Travel without appropriate insurance coverage is not permitted.

This requirement exists because travel involves financial commitments and circumstances that cannot always be anticipated or controlled. Illness, injury, travel delays, cancellations, missed connections, lost or delayed luggage, emergency medical situations and other unexpected events can affect even the best-planned trip.

Travel insurance should not be viewed simply as protection in case a traveler needs to cancel before departure. Depending on the policy purchased, it may provide valuable protection and assistance for events occurring both before and during the tour. Coverage varies considerably between policies, which is why travelers and families should understand the protection they have purchased, rather than assuming all travel insurance is the same.

Understanding the Financial Commitment

As a tour approaches, payments are made to airlines, hotels, activity providers and other suppliers to secure the arrangements included in the program. Many of these payments become non-refundable in accordance with the terms agreed with those suppliers.

If a traveler is unable to participate, STEM Study Tours may not be able to recover amounts that have already been committed on that traveler's behalf. Travel insurance provides an important layer of financial protection against covered circumstances that could otherwise result in significant out-of-pocket costs.

What Travel Insurance May Cover

Coverage varies significantly between policies, providers and countries. Depending on the policy selected, travel insurance may provide benefits relating to situations such as:

- Trip cancellation or interruption
- Illness or injury before or during travel
- Emergency medical treatment
- Travel delays or missed connections
- Lost, stolen or delayed luggage
- Emergency assistance or evacuation
- Other covered circumstances defined by the individual policy

Travelers and families should review the actual policy wording carefully, including covered reasons, benefit limits, exclusions, deductibles or excesses, and any conditions that may apply. Travelers should never assume that one travel insurance policy provides the same protection as another.

Travel & Medical Coverage

Travel insurance should address both the travel-related risks of the trip and appropriate medical coverage while away from home. Travelers and families should review their policy carefully to understand what protection is provided for trip cancellation or interruption, travel disruption, baggage and other travel-related events, as well as illness, injury, emergency medical treatment and medical evacuation where applicable. Travelers should not assume that their usual health insurance provides appropriate coverage at the destination, particularly when traveling internationally. Before departure, families should confirm whether their existing health coverage applies outside their home country and understand any limitations, exclusions or out-of-pocket requirements that may apply. If existing health coverage does not provide appropriate protection while traveling, the travel insurance selected should include suitable medical coverage for the destination and activities included in the program.

Cancel-For-Any-Reason (CFAR) Coverage

STEM Study Tours strongly recommends that families consider Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) coverage, or comparable coverage where available, because standard trip-cancellation insurance generally covers only the specific cancellation reasons defined by the policy. CFAR can provide greater flexibility for cancellations that would not otherwise qualify, although reimbursement and eligibility requirements vary by policy. CFAR commonly reimburses only a portion of eligible non-refundable costs rather than 100%. Some schools may choose to make CFAR or similar coverage a requirement for their participating students. Any additional insurance requirements established by the school should be clearly communicated to families.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Don't Wait to Purchase Coverage

Some insurance benefits, including Cancel For Any Reason or similar coverage, may only be available when insurance is purchased within a specific period following the traveler's initial trip payment or deposit. Waiting until later in the payment schedule may mean certain coverage options are no longer available. Families should review available insurance options and applicable purchase deadlines as soon as they make their initial trip payment, as requirements and deadlines vary by insurance provider and policy.

The School & Trip Leader's Role

Trip Leaders should make sure families understand that travel insurance is mandatory for participation and encourage them to arrange coverage early in the planning process. The school should also determine whether it has additional insurance requirements of its own for students or staff participating in educational travel. Questions about specific coverage, benefits, exclusions, eligibility, purchase deadlines or claims should be directed to the applicable insurance provider.

While Traveling

Travelers should have access to their insurance information while away and always carry a copy of their policy with them in case it is needed. Trip Leaders should also know how to locate the relevant insurance information for students in their care in case assistance is required during the tour. If an incident occurs that may lead to an insurance claim, travelers should retain relevant documentation, receipts and other records that may be required by their insurer.

Arranging Travel Insurance

Travel insurance options are made available to every traveler during the registration process, regardless of whether the program is domestic or international or where the traveler is located. This gives travelers and families an immediate opportunity to review available coverage rather than having to begin their search independently.

Travelers are not required to purchase the insurance offered through the registration process. They are welcome to obtain coverage from another insurance provider of their choice. What is required is that every traveler has appropriate travel insurance in place for the duration of the program.

Travel Day: Flights, Motorcoaches, Luggage & Meals

Travel day is often one of the busiest parts of the entire program. Whether your group is traveling by air, motorcoach or a combination of transportation, good organization and clear communication can help everyone begin the journey smoothly.

Before departure, make sure students and chaperones understand the meeting location and time, what they need to have readily accessible, and how the group will be organized while traveling. Remind everyone that each traveler remains responsible for their personal belongings and should keep important travel documents and essential items easily accessible.

Trip Leaders should allow sufficient time for the group to assemble, account for all travelers and luggage, and address any last-minute issues before the journey begins.

TEACHER TIP | Give Every Student a Number

At the beginning of the trip, assign each student a number and keep the numbers in the same sequence throughout the program. When you need a quick group check, ask students to call out their numbers in order. A break in the sequence immediately tells you who has not been accounted for. This can be especially useful when boarding motorcoaches, leaving airports, departing attractions and regrouping after free time or meal stops.

Air Travel

When a program includes air travel, Trip Leaders play an important role in keeping the group organized through check-in, security, boarding, connections and arrival. Airports can be busy and unfamiliar, particularly for students who have not traveled independently before, so establish clear expectations before entering the terminal.

Make sure students and chaperones remain with the group unless you have given them permission to separate and remind everyone to pay close attention to airport announcements, gate information, boarding instructions and directions from airline or airport personnel. Regularly account for all travelers, particularly after security, during connections, before boarding and after arrival. Establish a clear meeting point whenever the group must separate temporarily, such as during meal or restroom breaks.

Airline schedules, seat assignments, gates and boarding procedures may change, sometimes with very little notice. Travelers should understand that these decisions are controlled by the airline and airport authorities. The group should follow the most current instructions provided by airline personnel and allow sufficient time to move through the airport together.

Students should keep passports or other required identification, boarding documents, medications and essential personal items in a secure and easily accessible place rather than in checked luggage. Remind students not to leave passports, phones, wallets, boarding documents or carry-on belongings unattended in airports or on aircraft. Travelers should also keep the baggage-claim receipt or checked-luggage tag provided at check-in until their luggage has been collected at the final destination, as it may be needed if a bag is delayed, missing or must be identified.

Baggage Allowances & Fees

Baggage size, weight allowances and fees vary considerably by airline, route and ticket type and are subject to change. Always refer to your group's confirmed ticketing information for the baggage allowance that applies to your specific flights. Encourage all travelers to weigh their luggage before departure and make sure their bags comply with the applicable size and weight restrictions.

For domestic flights, checked baggage is not included in the group airfare. Airline group departments do not include checked-baggage fees in the group fare, so travelers must pay the applicable baggage fee directly to the airline at the ticket counter during check-in. This applies on both the outbound and return journeys. Trip Leaders should make sure travelers and families understand before departure that checked-baggage fees are an additional travel expense and should be prepared to pay them at the airport.

For international flights, checked-baggage allowances vary by airline and fare. The baggage arrangements that apply to your group will be provided with the confirmed flight information for your program. Until the airline, routing and ticket details have been finalized, families should not assume that checked baggage is included in the cost of their airfare.

Meals During Air Travel

Meal service varies considerably by airline, route and class of service. Some flights may include meals or refreshments, while others may offer food and beverages for purchase or provide little or no meal service. Travelers should not assume that a meal will be provided simply because air travel is included in the program. When meals are included on a catered flight, STEM Study Tours will submit any dietary requirements provided for travelers to the airline when advance meal requests are available. Special meal requests are requests only and cannot be guaranteed.

If any traveler has requested a special meal, the Trip Leader should ensure that the traveler confirms the request directly with the airline representative at check-in. This should be done even when STEM Study Tours has already submitted the request in advance. Information does not always transfer correctly between airline systems or departments, and a previously requested meal may not ultimately be available onboard. Where appropriate, travelers should also reconfirm their meal request with cabin crew after boarding.

If a traveler has a food allergy, medically necessary dietary restriction or another significant dietary concern, the traveler should not rely solely on airline catering. Airlines may not be able to guarantee a completely allergen-free environment or that a suitable meal will be available. Travelers and families should review the airline's current policies and obtain appropriate medical guidance before travel when necessary.

TEACHER TIP | Have a Back-Up Food Plan

When a traveler has an important dietary requirement, plan for an alternative even when a special airline meal has been requested. After clearing security, allow sufficient time for the traveler to purchase suitable food or snacks for the journey when needed, particularly before longer flights or when onboard meal options may be limited. Travelers may also carry suitable food for the journey where permitted. However, any food taken through airport security, customs or border controls must comply with the applicable requirements for the journey and destination.

Passports & Security

For international travel, consider dividing a larger group into smaller, manageable groups before approaching security or passport-control areas, with a designated adult responsible for helping monitor each group. When the Trip Leader is holding student passports, distribute passports to students immediately before they are required to present them at security, border control or another official checkpoint. Once all members of the group have completed the required

process, re-collect the passports promptly and confirm that every passport has been returned before moving on. Students may need their passports again at the departure gate before boarding an international flight. When this occurs, distribute passports before boarding begins and re-collect them once the group is safely aboard and passport checks have been completed.

Never collect passports casually while the group is moving through the terminal. Establish a clear stopping point, count the passports against your traveler list, and confirm that every traveler and every passport is accounted for before continuing.

Motorcoach Travel

When traveling by motorcoach, establish clear expectations for boarding, departures and rest stops. Students should understand that departure times are firm and that they must remain aware of when and where the group is expected to meet. Use your established group-counting system every time the motorcoach is preparing to depart. Never rely on a visual headcount alone. Confirm that every traveler is accounted for before giving the driver the all-clear to leave.

Once the group has exited the motorcoach at a stop, conduct a complete sweep of the vehicle from front to back before moving away from the coach. Walk through every aisle and check each seating area, including the rear of the coach. Look for phones, charging cables, wallets, bags, jackets and other belongings that may have been left behind, but most importantly, make absolutely certain that no student remains on the motorcoach.

Before Leaving the Aircraft or Motorcoach

Before leaving an aircraft or motorcoach, ask travelers to check their seating area, seat pockets and the floor around them for personal belongings and rubbish. The group is responsible for collecting and appropriately disposing of any rubbish generated during the journey rather than leaving it behind for airline or motorcoach staff. For motorcoach journeys, particularly when the same vehicle is used for several days, encourage travelers to remove rubbish regularly rather than allowing bottles, wrappers and other items to accumulate.

Legal Requirements for Travel

Accurate passenger information and valid travel documentation are essential to every STEM Study Tours program. Airlines, transportation providers and border authorities require passenger information to match the identification or travel documents that will be used for the journey. Errors, missing information or documentation that does not meet current entry requirements can result in additional costs, delays or the traveler being unable to travel.

Passenger Registration & Legal Names

Travel documentation and entry requirements must be taken extremely seriously. Each traveler is responsible for having the correct passport, identification, visas, authorizations, permits, parental documentation and any other documents or travel clearances required for the journey.

Requirements vary according to the traveler's nationality, destination, transit country and individual circumstances and may change. Failure to meet a required documentation or international travel requirement may result in the traveler being refused check-in, boarding, transit or entry and being unable to participate in the trip.

Trip Leaders should reinforce the importance of completing all required travel documentation well in advance and ensuring that the information supplied for travel arrangements matches the documentation the traveler will actually use for the journey. Do not assume that a documentation error, missing authorization or incorrect traveler detail can be corrected at the airport.

Dual Nationals

Travelers who hold citizenship in more than one country should confirm which passport or travel document they are required to use for each part of their journey. Some governments require their citizens to enter or leave the country using that country's passport. For example, U.S. citizens, including dual nationals, are generally required to enter and depart the United States using a valid U.S. passport.

IMPORTANT | Passport Information Changes

If a traveler's passport or passport information changes between registration and travel, the updated information MUST be entered into the registration portal immediately and before airline ticketing or required travel information is finalized.

Requirements vary by nationality and destination. Dual-national travelers should check the current requirements of the governments concerned well before travel and ensure that the passport information provided for airline ticketing and travel clearances is consistent with the documents they will use for the journey.

TEACHER TIP | Verifying Your Travelers' Information

Assign one staff member responsibility for verifying the traveler information on file before the group is ticketed by the airline. Have each student and staff member provide a copy of the passport they will use for travel. Using the group registration link, compare the information entered for each traveler directly against the passport, including the traveler's full legal name, date of birth, gender, nationality, passport number, passport issue date and passport expiration date, together with any other required traveler information. Every detail should be checked carefully before final information is submitted for airline ticketing.

Visas & Electronic Travel Authorizations

In addition to passport requirements, travelers may require a visa, electronic travel authorization or other advance permission to travel, depending upon their nationality, destination, transit points and individual circumstances.



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Never assume that every traveler in the group has the same entry requirements. Requirements can differ between travelers, even when everyone is traveling on the same itinerary, and may change before departure. Each traveler and family is responsible for ensuring that all required visas, travel authorizations and entry permissions have been obtained.

Where an electronic travel authorization applies, the authorization should be obtained well in advance of departure. Do not leave applications until travel day. A traveler who does not hold the documentation or authorization required for the journey may be refused check-in, boarding, transit or entry.

Other Destinations

These are examples only and are not a complete list of international entry requirements. Many countries have introduced, or may introduce, electronic travel authorizations, visa-waiver registrations, online arrival declarations or other advance-entry requirements.

Requirements depend upon each traveler's nationality, passport, destination, transit countries and individual circumstances. Trip Leaders should ensure that travelers and families research the current requirements for every country included in the itinerary, including countries used only for transit, using official government, border authority or immigration sources.

Do not assume that because a traveler does not require a traditional visa, no advance travel authorization is required.

IMPORTANT: A traveler who does not have the required visa, electronic authorization or other travel clearance may be refused check-in, boarding, transit or entry and may be unable to participate in the trip.

Applying for an Electronic Travel Authorization

Travelers must have their valid passport in hand before beginning an electronic travel-authorization application. The application requires information taken directly from the passport, and the authorization is normally linked to the passport used to apply. A traveler who is still waiting for a passport to be issued cannot complete the process using estimated, provisional or future passport information.

TEACHER TIP | Organize an Authorization Evening

For groups traveling internationally, consider arranging a parent and traveler meeting with access to computers and printers. Families can complete their own required applications using official government websites while the Trip Leader confirms that each traveler has completed the appropriate process. Ask every family to: **a)** bring the valid passport the traveler will use for the journey; **b)** complete the application using information copied directly from that passport or, if an authorization has already been obtained, bring a copy of the approval and confirm that it remains valid for the intended dates of travel and the passport being used; and **c)** print the approval confirmation and carry a copy during travel, while also retaining an electronic copy that can be accessed if needed. Alternatively, require each traveler to provide confirmation of approval by a clearly communicated school deadline. The Trip Leader should maintain a checklist showing that each required authorization has been confirmed, while families remain responsible for completing their own applications accurately and meeting all government entry requirements.

Once an application has been approved, travelers should carefully check that the passport details shown in the approval confirmation match the passport exactly. Print the approval confirmation and carry a copy during travel, while also retaining an electronic copy that can be accessed if needed. Although some authorizations are electronically linked to the passport and do not require a printed document, carrying the confirmation provides a useful record of the authorization and its reference number.

IMPORTANT | A New Passport May Require a New Authorization

If a traveler receives a new passport after obtaining an electronic travel authorization, the existing authorization may no longer be valid for travel because it is connected to the previous passport details. The traveler must check the applicable government requirements and reapply when required. The authorization and the passport presented for travel must correspond. Do not assume that an authorization connected to an old, expired, replaced or changed passport can be transferred or corrected at the airport.

REAL ID & Identification | Domestic Air Travel Within the USA

REAL ID requirements are now in effect for domestic air travel within the United States. Travelers aged 18 and older must present a REAL ID-compliant state-issued driver's license or identification card, or another form of identification accepted by TSA, such as a valid passport.

STEM Study Tours requires every traveler, regardless of age, to carry valid identification appropriate to the journey. While TSA may not require children under 18 traveling with an adult companion to present identification for domestic U.S. air travel, we strongly believe every member of a school group should carry identification appropriate to the journey. This provides an additional safeguard should the group become separated or identification be required unexpectedly during travel.

For travelers aged 18 and older, a standard state-issued driver's license or identification card that is not REAL ID compliant is no longer sufficient by itself for domestic air travel. A passport or another TSA-accepted form of identification may be used instead.

Trip Leaders should verify well before departure that every traveler has the identification required by STEM Study Tours and that all adult travelers also meet current TSA identification requirements.

Current federal requirements and acceptable forms of identification can be found on the Department of Homeland Security REAL ID website.

Your Itinerary

Your final itinerary is the working day-by-day schedule for your group's program and will include confirmed activities, scheduled times, transfers, meals, excursions and other important travel arrangements. Because every STEM Study Tours program is planned specifically for the group traveling, the itinerary may be updated several times as arrangements are confirmed.

STEM Study Tours will work closely with you to incorporate your group's program requirements and any specific requests discussed during the planning process. However, final operating times and availability are determined by the individual hotels, transportation companies, activity providers, restaurants and other suppliers involved in your program. For this reason, the order, timing or availability of individual activities may change as arrangements are finalized.

Your final itinerary will normally be provided at least two weeks before departure, provided all required traveler information, documentation and payments have been received and no outstanding changes are still being made to the booking. Trip Leaders should review the final itinerary carefully when it is received and make sure all accompanying Trip Leaders and chaperones have access to the current version.

Understanding Your Itinerary

All times shown on your itinerary are presented using the 24-hour clock. For example, 09:30 is 9:30 a.m. and 17:30 is 5:30 p.m. Trip Leaders should make sure accompanying staff and chaperones understand this format before travel to avoid confusion when following scheduled meeting, transfer and activity times.

Your electronic itinerary contains two tabs, located at the bottom of the document:

Tab 1 | Day-by-Day Itinerary: The daily schedule for your group, including planned activities, transfers, meals, excursions and applicable timings.

Tab 2 | Essential Travel Information: Important operational information for the program, including hotel names, addresses and contact information, motorcoach provider details, emergency contact numbers and other information needed during travel.

Be sure to review and print both tabs before departure. The information contained in the second tab is particularly important and should be kept readily accessible throughout the program. If an operational change is made during the program, follow the updated information provided by your Tour Director, even if it differs from the itinerary originally issued before departure.

While Traveling

Once your journey begins, circumstances can change quickly. Flight delays, cancellations, missed connections and other travel disruptions can affect arrangements waiting for your group at the destination. If your group experiences a significant delay or disruption while traveling, contact STEM Study Tours as soon as you have reliable information about the situation. Use the 24-hour contact number provided on your final Travel Itinerary. Once we are aware of the situation, we can notify your Tour Director, transportation provider, hotel and other affected suppliers and make any necessary adjustments to the arrangements we control.

Do not assume that STEM Study Tours or your Tour Director will automatically be notified by the airline or transportation provider if your journey is delayed. Contact us directly as soon as you know that your group's arrival plans have changed.

Luggage Security

Travelers should be aware that checked baggage may be subject to security inspection during transit. If a traveler chooses to lock checked luggage, use a lock that complies with the security requirements applicable to the airports and countries through which the group will travel. Security authorities may need to open checked baggage for inspection, and unsuitable locks may be removed or damaged.

Arriving at the Airport

Groups must arrive at the airport a minimum of three hours before the scheduled departure time. Traveling as a school group requires additional time for the entire party to assemble, check in, check baggage, complete security procedures and move through the airport together.

Trip Leaders should make sure all travelers understand that the three-hour requirement refers to arrival at the airport, not the time they should leave home, school or the hotel. Build additional travel time into the plan for traffic, transportation delays and other circumstances that could delay the group's arrival. Do not shorten the three-hour arrival period simply because individual travelers may be permitted or advised to arrive later. The requirement applies to the group as a whole.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Three Hours Means Three Hours

Traveling as a group takes more time than traveling individually. Students and staff must assemble, luggage must be checked, travel documents may need to be verified and the entire group must move through security and to the departure gate together. The three-hour requirement means your group should be physically at the airport at least three hours before scheduled departure, not leaving for the airport at that time. Build additional transportation time into your plans so that traffic or other delays do not reduce this important margin.

Airline Seating

STEM Study Tours will request group seating and any known individual seating requirements when the airline and fare conditions allow. Airline seating assignments are controlled by the carrier and cannot be guaranteed by STEM Study Tours.

Trip Leaders should review seating arrangements during airline check-in and raise any important seating requirements with airline personnel. Changes made by the airline, including aircraft changes or operational adjustments, may affect seating that was previously assigned.

Border Control, Customs & Connections

International journeys may require travelers to complete immigration, border-control and customs procedures during the journey. Where and when these formalities occur depends upon the itinerary, countries involved and routing. Trip Leaders should pay careful attention to the instructions provided by airport, airline and border officials, particularly when the group has an onward connection.

Do not assume that checked baggage will automatically travel through to the final destination. Confirm at airline check-in where checked baggage must be collected and whether it must be presented or rechecked during the journey.

Managing Luggage During the Program

Luggage handling assistance is not normally included as part of the program. Each traveler should be able to manage their own luggage throughout the journey, including moving bags through airports and hotels and, where required, loading or unloading luggage from group transportation. Trip Leaders should reinforce this expectation before departure, particularly with younger travelers or anyone considering bringing large or multiple pieces of luggage.

Lost or Delayed Baggage

If checked baggage does not arrive with the group, report it to the airline or its designated baggage service before leaving the airport. Do not wait until the group reaches the hotel. Retain all documentation provided when the report is filed, including claim or reference numbers, baggage descriptions and instructions for tracking or follow-up. The hotel address and contact information needed for delivery or correspondence can be found on the second tab of your final Travel Itinerary.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Report Missing Luggage Before You Leave

If checked luggage does not arrive, do not leave the airport before reporting it to the airline or its designated baggage service. Filing the report while you are still there establishes the baggage claim and provides the reference information needed for tracking and follow-up. Keep all documentation provided by the airline, particularly if the traveler may later need it for an insurance claim.

Notify your Tour Director that the baggage is missing so the Tour Director is aware of the situation and can take it into consideration during the program. However, responsibility for communicating with the airline, monitoring the baggage claim and completing any required follow-up remains with the traveler and the group's leadership team. Trip Leaders

should also understand the group's travel-insurance provisions relating to baggage delay or loss and know what documentation may be required if an insurance claim becomes necessary.

Cabin / Carry-On Baggage

Cabin baggage allowances vary considerably by airline and fare type. Travelers must check the size, weight and number of cabin bags permitted on their specific flights before departure. Do not assume that a bag accepted by one airline will meet the requirements of another airline used during the same journey.

Some airlines strictly enforce cabin-baggage allowances and may physically measure or weigh bags at check-in or at the boarding gate. A bag that exceeds the permitted allowance may need to be checked into the aircraft hold and may incur an additional charge. For this reason, travelers should measure and weigh cabin baggage before leaving home, just as they would checked luggage. Where a journey includes more than one airline, check the allowance for every carrier and pack according to the most restrictive allowance that applies.

Traveling with Medication

Travelers who require medication during the journey should keep essential medication in their carry-on luggage rather than checked baggage so that it remains accessible if checked luggage is delayed or lost. Medication should be clearly identified and, where appropriate, travelers should carry supporting documentation such as a copy of the prescription or a letter from their doctor.

Before traveling internationally, families must also confirm that every medication the traveler intends to carry is legally permitted in the destination and any transit countries. A medication that is routinely prescribed or available over the counter in one country may be restricted or prohibited in another. For example, some common allergy, cold and sinus medications containing pseudoephedrine are prohibited from being brought into Mexico.

Requirements for prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, liquid medication, controlled substances and medical equipment vary between countries and may also involve documentation or quantity restrictions. Families should check current requirements with official government, customs, health or embassy sources for every country on the itinerary before departure.

Liquid medications may also be subject to different airport-security procedures from ordinary carry-on liquids. Travelers should not assume that standard liquid-size or clear-bag rules apply to medically necessary liquids. Current security requirements should be checked for the airports through which the traveler will pass.

Do not assume that carrying a prescription or doctor's letter automatically makes a medication legal to bring into another country.

TEACHER TIP | Check the Medication, Not Just the Documentation

Remind families to check the actual active ingredients in medications, including over-the-counter products such as allergy, cold and sinus remedies. A familiar medication may contain an ingredient that is restricted or prohibited at the destination. This should be researched well before departure so that the family has time to speak with their medical provider about an appropriate alternative if necessary.

On Tour: Daily Operations, Supervision & Activities

Once your group arrives at the destination, the Trip Leader and accompanying school staff play an essential role in keeping the program organized, students supported and the itinerary running smoothly. Your Tour Director will

coordinate the itinerary, suppliers, transportation and activities, but responsibility for the supervision, conduct and welfare of students remains with the school's leadership team throughout the program.

Good communication between the Trip Leader, accompanying staff and Tour Director is essential. Make sure responsibilities are clearly divided among your leadership team so that students are appropriately supervised while teachers and chaperones are also able to enjoy the experience.

Student Supervision & Trip Leader Responsibilities

Students must remain under the supervision of the school's designated adults throughout the program. The Tour Director is responsible for operating and coordinating the tour but cannot assume responsibility for supervising or caring for students on behalf of the school.

Trip Leaders should establish a clear supervision plan with accompanying staff before travel and review responsibilities as needed throughout the program. At all times, at least one designated adult should be available and responsible for responding to student needs, including illness, injury, behavioral concerns or other unexpected situations.

Each day, make sure responsibilities within the leadership team are clearly understood and that your Tour Director knows which adult should be contacted if assistance is needed. The supervision structure established before travel should remain consistent throughout the program so students know which teacher or chaperone is responsible for them.

Planning Your Leadership Team

Before departure, divide students among the adults traveling with your group so that each staff member or chaperone has a defined group of students for whom they provide primary oversight. This gives students a clear adult to approach and helps prevent supervision responsibilities from becoming unclear during busy travel days and activities.

It can also be helpful to assign each adult a specific area of responsibility for the entire program. Depending upon your group's needs, responsibilities might include:

- **Wellness & Medication:** Monitor general student wellness and oversee medication in accordance with your school's established policies and procedures.
- **Student Funds:** Manage any student funds entrusted to the school and conduct a regular "banking" time, often after breakfast, when students receive money they may need for meals, activities or personal expenses that day.
- **Meals & Dietary Needs:** Review known dietary requirements and communicate with restaurant, hotel or catering staff at each meal to help ensure these needs have been clearly understood.
- **Student Records & Emergency Information:** Carry the group's essential student information and required documentation during activities and excursions, including applicable medical information, emergency contacts, consent and release documents and other records the school requires to be readily available. If a situation arises, this person can quickly access the necessary information, assist with any required parent or guardian contact and support the Trip Leader with the school's response procedures.
- **Daily Readiness & Briefings:** Help make sure students are prepared for the day's activities, including appropriate clothing, required equipment and necessary personal protection such as sunscreen or insect repellent. Hold short morning and evening briefings with students to review the day's plans, expectations and responsibilities. Morning briefings can cover the schedule, meeting times, clothing or equipment needs, meals, spending money and any health or safety considerations for the day. Evening briefings can review the following day's plans, meeting times, what students need to prepare and any expectations for the evening or morning ahead.

Assigning responsibilities in advance does not remove the Trip Leader's overall responsibility for the group. It creates a clear structure so that important tasks are assigned, everyone understands their role and critical responsibilities are less likely to be overlooked during a busy program.

Group Communication

Before the program begins, agree on the primary method your leadership team will use to communicate with one another and with your Tour Director while traveling. Make sure all accompanying adults have the necessary contact information and understand how urgent information, schedule changes or student concerns will be communicated within the group.

Hotels, Curfews & Evening Conduct

STEM Study Tours groups are expected to be considerate of other hotel guests and respectful of hotel rules throughout their stay. Unless different arrangements are required by the itinerary or agreed for your group, students should be in their assigned rooms by 10:00 p.m., with quiet/no-noise expectations in effect by 10:30 p.m. If an evening activity or late arrival means the group returns to the hotel after these times, Trip Leaders should remind students before entering the property that other guests may already be sleeping. Students should proceed quietly and directly to their assigned rooms and avoid gathering or socializing in hallways or other guest areas. When returning to the hotel late, consider positioning accompanying adults on the floors used by students while the group returns to its rooms. This helps reinforce quiet behavior and minimize disturbance to other hotel guests.

TEACHER TIP | Keep Supervision Consistent

Assign each student to a specific teacher or chaperone before travel and maintain that same supervision structure throughout the program. The assigned adult should remain responsible for those students during daytime activities, evening returns and overnight periods, including confirming that students are in their assigned rooms and completing appropriate room or welfare checks in accordance with school policy. Students should know that if they become ill, need assistance or have an emergency during the night, their first point of contact is the teacher or chaperone responsible for their group.

Student supervision remains the responsibility of the school's leadership team while at the hotel. Trip Leaders should establish an evening supervision plan among accompanying adults, including responsibility for monitoring student areas and responding to any issues that arise during the night.

Supervision During Evening & Recreational Activities

The same supervision standards apply during evening and recreational activities as during the daytime program. Teachers and chaperones remain responsible for actively supervising their assigned students throughout the activity, even when activity staff, instructors or your Tour Director are present. Informal and recreational activities can be exciting for students, so adults should remain engaged, reinforce appropriate behavior and participate alongside students where appropriate.

Sun & Insect Protection

Trip Leaders are responsible for reminding and instructing students when sunscreen, insect repellent or other appropriate personal protection should be used during the program. Conditions can change from day to day and between activities, so these precautions should be considered throughout the tour rather than only at the beginning of the program.

During the Welcome & Safety Meeting, students will also be reminded to follow the instructions of their Trip Leaders regarding sunscreen, insect repellent and other protective measures appropriate to the day's activities and conditions.

Trip Leaders should actively reinforce these precautions whenever conditions warrant and should not assume that students will remember to apply or reapply protective products on their own.

If additional sunscreen, insect repellent or other protective supplies are needed during the program, speak with your Tour Director, who can assist in identifying an appropriate place where they may be purchased.

Alcohol & Student Conduct

Students participating in a STEM Study Tours program may not purchase, possess, be provided with or consume alcohol at any time during the program, regardless of the legal drinking age in the destination or the practices that may be customary in their home country. This expectation applies throughout the tour, including during meals, activities, free time, at the hotel and at any other location visited by the group.

Teachers, chaperones and other adults must not purchase, provide, serve or otherwise make alcohol available to students. Local laws relating to minors and alcohol can differ substantially from those travelers are accustomed to at home, and conduct that may be viewed differently in another country can carry serious legal consequences at the destination. Trip Leaders should communicate the SST no-alcohol requirement clearly to all adults and students before departure and enforce it throughout the program.

In destinations where local law may permit alcohol consumption at an age younger than the students are accustomed to at home, the STEM Study Tours rule still applies. Where appropriate, teachers should also make restaurant, hotel and activity staff aware that students traveling with the group are not to be served alcoholic beverages.

Adult travelers are responsible for complying with local laws and their school's own policies regarding alcohol. Adults who choose to purchase alcoholic beverages should be aware that identification requirements may differ significantly from those at home and should carry appropriate government-issued identification when required. Adult alcohol consumption must never interfere with the supervision, safety or care of students.

Tipping & Gratuities

Tipping customs vary considerably between destinations and may be very different from those travelers are accustomed to at home. In some countries, gratuities form an important part of compensation for hospitality and service staff, while in others tipping may be less customary or follow different expectations. Trip Leaders and accompanying adults should not assume that the tipping practices they follow at home will be appropriate while traveling.

Gratuities associated with meals already included as part of your STEM Study Tours itinerary are included, so additional tipping for those meals is not expected. Travelers may, however, encounter other situations where gratuities are customary, including meals purchased independently, hotel services and other services obtained outside the included program arrangements.

Suggested Gratuity Guidelines

As a general planning guide, customary gratuities for good service may include approximately the amounts below. All amounts shown are in U.S. Dollars (USD).

- **Motorcoach Driver:** $100 per day from the group as a whole, not per traveler.
- **Tour Director or National Guide:** $5 per participant, per day, per guide.
- **Local Guide:** $3 per participant for a 2–3 hour guiding segment.
- **Ski Instructor:** $5 per participant, per day.

- **Dive Instructor:** $10 per tank, plus $50 per participant for the three-day course instruction; or $20 per participant, per day for certified divers. Dive instructor gratuities are shared with the boat captain, deck crew and equipment personnel.

These amounts are guidelines rather than required charges. Appropriate gratuities may vary according to the destination, length and type of service, group size and local customs. STEM Study Tours can provide more specific guidance for your program when needed.

Gratuities may also be incorporated into the cost of your program and distributed on your group's behalf if requested during the planning process. When purchasing meals, beverages or other services independently, take a moment to understand the tipping customs of the destination. What is considered perfectly normal at home may be interpreted very differently elsewhere.

Punctuality & Schedule Changes

Your itinerary is carefully coordinated around confirmed reservations, transportation, activity times, meals and supplier schedules. It is essential that the group is ready to depart and arrives at scheduled activities on time. Even a short delay can affect later arrangements or, in some circumstances, result in a reservation or activity being shortened or forfeited.

Trip Leaders should build sufficient time into group movements for students to assemble, use restrooms, collect belongings and be accounted for before the scheduled departure time. The time shown on your itinerary is the time the group needs to be ready, not the time students should begin gathering.

If you become aware that your group may be delayed, notify your Tour Director immediately. The Tour Director can contact the appropriate supplier and determine whether arrangements can be adjusted. While every effort will be made to assist, suppliers may not be able to extend or reschedule a confirmed reservation when the group arrives late.

Concerns During the Program

If you have a concern about any aspect of your program, including accommodations, meals, transportation, activities, instruction, scheduling or other arrangements, please bring it to your Tour Director's attention as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the program to mention something that may be possible to address while the group is still traveling.

Your Tour Director can investigate the concern, communicate with the appropriate supplier and work with STEM Study Tours to identify possible solutions. While not every situation can be changed or resolved immediately, we need the opportunity to understand the concern and assist while the group is still in destination.

If the concern is significant, ongoing or cannot be resolved locally, contact STEM Study Tours using the 24-hour contact information provided on your final Travel Itinerary so that our team can become involved directly.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Tell Us While We Can Help

If something is not meeting expectations, please tell your Tour Director while the group is still traveling. Many concerns can be investigated or addressed during the program, but our ability to help may become limited once the group has moved on or returned home. If we do not know there is a problem, we do not have the opportunity to try to correct it.

Rental Equipment & Damage

Some programs include the use or rental of specialist equipment as part of the scheduled activities. Where equipment is included, arrangements will be made according to the requirements of your specific itinerary and the policies of the supplier providing the equipment.

Travelers are responsible for taking reasonable care of any equipment issued to them and for returning it in accordance with the supplier's instructions. Suppliers may require an adult to provide a credit card or other form of security against loss or damage, and Trip Leaders should be prepared for this possibility when specialist rental equipment forms part of the program.

If equipment is lost, damaged or not returned, the supplier may require payment for repair or replacement in accordance with its terms. Any charge relating to lost or damaged equipment remains the responsibility of the traveler or group unless otherwise stated in the program arrangements.

If a loss or damage occurs, retain any receipts, reports or other documentation provided by the supplier. Depending upon the travel-insurance policy purchased, some costs may be eligible for consideration under the policy, and the insurer will determine what documentation is required for a claim.

Hotel Check-Out & Late Departures

Hotel check-out times apply even when your group is not departing for the airport until later in the day. Trip Leaders should make sure all student and staff rooms are completely vacated by the hotel's stated check-out time, all personal belongings have been removed and any individual charges have been settled before the group continues with the day's activities.

When there is a significant period between hotel check-out and departure, STEM Study Tours will work with the hotel and your Tour Director to identify available luggage-storage arrangements. While complimentary luggage storage is often requested, availability cannot be guaranteed and some hotels may charge for storage or other late-departure arrangements.

Where appropriate and available, another option may be to retain one room for a late check-out and use it as a central location for the group's luggage rather than extending multiple rooms. Any late check-out arrangement is subject to hotel availability and may involve an additional charge.

Before leaving the hotel, Trip Leaders should conduct a final check to make sure all rooms have been vacated, luggage has been accounted for and students have not left passports, identification, medication, chargers, personal belongings or valuables behind.

TEACHER TIP | Conduct a Final Room Sweep

Before checking out, have each teacher or chaperone inspect the rooms used by their assigned students. Check bathrooms, closets, drawers, under beds, electrical outlets and, especially, room safes; confirm that luggage, medication and personal belongings have been collected; and inspect the room for any damage. If students are responsible for carrying their own passports, the assigned adult should physically verify that each student has their passport in hand before the group leaves the hotel. If damage has occurred, notify the hotel and be prepared to settle any applicable charges before leaving the property. Do not allow students to depart the hotel until their assigned adult has completed the room check and confirmed that the room has been properly vacated.

Lost Personal Items

If a traveler realizes that an item has been left behind at a hotel, restaurant, activity venue or other location, report it as soon as possible while the group is still in the area. Your Tour Director can help identify the appropriate location or contact information while the program is underway, but travelers and the school's leadership team remain responsible for following up on personal belongings. If the missing item is a passport, identification document, medication or other essential travel item, notify your Tour Director and STEM Study Tours immediately rather than treating it as a routine Lost & Found matter.

If the group has already left the area, the Trip Leader or traveler should contact the property or venue directly and ask for its Lost & Found department. Be prepared to provide a clear description of the item, where and when it may have been left and the traveler's contact information.

If the item is located, any costs associated with packaging, shipping, customs or returning the item are the responsibility of the traveler or school. The supplier may require a credit card or other form of payment before arranging its return. For hotel items, contact information can be found on the second tab of your final Travel Itinerary.

Additional Medical Needs While Traveling

If a traveler becomes ill or injured during the program and requires ongoing medical treatment, follow-up care or changes to their travel arrangements, notify your Tour Director and STEM Study Tours as soon as possible. We can assist with the operational aspects of the program and help the group respond to changes affecting the itinerary, but decisions regarding medical treatment and insurance coverage must be handled through the appropriate medical professionals, the traveler or family and their travel-insurance provider.

If a medical condition affects the traveler's ability to continue with the planned journey, including the need for a different flight, delayed travel, special airline assistance or other accommodation, contact the traveler's insurance provider promptly for guidance and authorization where required. STEM Study Tours may assist with information relating to the group's existing travel arrangements, but we cannot authorize medical treatment or determine what services or additional costs will be covered by an individual insurance policy.

Retain all medical reports, discharge paperwork, prescriptions, receipts and other documentation provided during treatment. If a physician recommends changes to the traveler's activities, transportation or onward travel, request written documentation of those recommendations before leaving the medical facility whenever possible. This information may be required by the airline, insurance provider or other service provider and may also be needed when submitting an insurance claim.

If additional care such as physiotherapy, counseling or another form of follow-up treatment is recommended, the traveler, family or school should work directly with the travel-insurance provider and appropriate medical professionals to determine available options and coverage. The Tour Director cannot arrange or authorize medical treatment on behalf of the traveler or assume responsibility for managing an insurance claim.

School-Requested Additions & Changes

Your STEM Study Tours itinerary is designed as a complete program, including the activities, transportation, meals and evening experiences confirmed for your group. If your school requests an additional activity, facility, transportation service or other arrangement, we are happy to investigate availability and applicable costs on your behalf.

Once an additional service has been requested and confirmed specifically for your group, the school may remain responsible for the associated cost even if it later decides not to use the service. Suppliers may have reserved space,

equipment, transportation, staffing or other resources specifically for your group and may apply cancellation charges in accordance with their terms.

If plans change, STEM Study Tours will work with the supplier whenever possible to request a cancellation, reduction or alternative arrangement. However, once a service has been confirmed, cancellation or reduction of the associated charges cannot be guaranteed.

Loss of Passport

A lost passport can significantly disrupt an international program, potentially resulting in missed activities, additional transportation and accommodation costs, and considerable time spent arranging emergency replacement documents. Fortunately, many passport-loss situations can be prevented through careful supervision and consistent procedures. For international travel, Trip Leaders should establish a clear passport-management plan before departure and ensure that every adult understands his or her responsibility.



Passport Management Best Practices

- **Keep Copies of Travel Documents:** Before departure, Trip Leaders should have a clear copy of each traveler's passport and any required visa, visa-waiver or electronic travel authorization documentation. Travelers should also have access to a separate copy of their own documents. Digital backup copies stored securely may provide an additional safeguard.
- **Use Assigned Student Groups:** Each teacher or chaperone should be responsible for the passports of the students in his or her assigned group. This keeps passport accountability aligned with the same small-group supervision structure used throughout the program.
- **Collect Passports When Appropriate:** After passports are no longer required for immigration, border control or another official purpose, the responsible teacher should collect the passports for his or her assigned students and keep them together in a secure, organized manner.
- **Secure Passports at the Hotel:** When appropriate facilities are available, passports should be secured in the hotel safe or another secure location rather than carried by students during daily activities. Your Tour Director can assist in determining the options available at the accommodation.

- **Physically Verify Passports Before Departure:** Before leaving a hotel, airport, port or other location where passports have been distributed, teachers should physically confirm that every student in their assigned group has their passport in hand or that the passport has been recollected for safekeeping.
- **Repeat the Process Throughout the Program:** Any time passports must be distributed, the same controlled process should be used for distributing, verifying and recollecting them.

If a Passport Is Lost

Report any missing passport to your Tour Director immediately. Replacement procedures vary depending upon the traveler's nationality, age, location and passport-issuing authority. Obtaining replacement travel documentation may require an appointment or personal appearance, supporting identity or parental documentation, photographs, additional travel and other requirements.

STEM Study Tours will assist with the replacement process whenever possible, including locating the appropriate embassy or consulate, arranging or assisting with appointments, coordinating local transportation and helping manage necessary itinerary changes. If a student must travel to another city to obtain replacement documentation, an adult from the school group will be required to accompany the student.

All costs associated with the loss and replacement of a passport remain the responsibility of the traveler and/or school. These may include passport or emergency-document fees, ground transportation, last-minute airfare, accommodation, meals and other related expenses. If flights are required, the teacher or school will be responsible for making and paying for those reservations.

Financial Preparedness for Passport Emergencies

Because a passport emergency can create significant unplanned expenses, schools should establish in advance how emergency costs will be handled. At least one accompanying adult should have access to sufficient available credit or another school-approved means of payment to cover potentially substantial unexpected travel expenses. Schools should not assume that all emergency expenses can be arranged or paid remotely once the group is traveling.

Travelers should retain receipts and documentation associated with the incident and contact their travel insurance provider to determine whether eligible expenses may be reimbursable under their policy.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Be Prepared for Emergency Expenses

A lost passport can require unexpected transportation, replacement-document fees, accommodation or even last-minute airfare for the student and accompanying adult. Schools should establish before departure how emergency expenses will be paid and ensure that at least one accompanying adult has access to sufficient available credit or another school-approved means of payment. Do not assume that every emergency expense can be arranged or paid remotely from home.

TEACHER TIP | Passport Accountability

The easiest passport emergency to manage is the one that never occurs. Keep passports organized by assigned student group, limit unnecessary handling, secure them appropriately during the program, and physically account for every passport whenever they are distributed or recollected.

Accommodations

Your accommodations are an important part of the overall travel experience, and students should be reminded that hotels and other lodging facilities are shared environments. School behavior expectations remain in effect throughout

the stay, including in guest rooms, corridors, elevators, dining areas and other common spaces. Teachers and chaperones remain responsible for supervising students and helping ensure that hotel policies and property are respected.

Room Assignments & Rooming Requests

Room configurations are based upon the rooming requirements provided during the booking process and are reflected in the program price. Changes in student numbers, gender mix, teaching staff or requested room configurations may require additional rooms and could result in additional costs. Please advise STEM Study Tours of changes as early as possible so that we can work with the accommodation provider regarding availability.

A complete rooming list is required a minimum of 60 days prior to departure. Trip Leaders using our reservation portal will complete the rooming list electronically, assigning each student and staff member to a specific room. Groups not using the reservation portal will be provided with a rooming-list spreadsheet to complete and return. Room assignments should take into account student gender, appropriate staff placement and any other school-specific supervision requirements. Any special room-placement requests should also be communicated at that time. While STEM Study Tours will submit these requests to the accommodation provider, specific room locations, configurations and proximity requests cannot be guaranteed.

Arrival & Room Inspection

Upon entering their rooms, students should immediately report any existing damage, missing items or maintenance concerns to their assigned teacher or chaperone. The responsible adult should ensure that the concern is reported to the hotel promptly so that the group is not later held responsible for pre-existing damage. Photographs may also be taken when appropriate to document the condition upon arrival.

Teachers should remind students that they will be held financially responsible for damage they cause to hotel rooms or property during the stay.

Hotel Charges & Incidental Expenses

Unless specifically included in your program, personal purchases and incidental hotel charges are the responsibility of the individual traveler or school. These may include room service, snacks, purchases, lost items or keys, damage charges and other optional services. Some accommodations may require a credit card authorization or deposit at check-in to cover incidental expenses or potential damages. Trip Leaders should travel with an appropriate school-approved means of payment available for this purpose. Any outstanding charges associated with the group should be resolved prior to departure from the property.

Safes & Valuables

Hotel safes, in-room safes or other secure-storage options may be available for passports, money and other valuables. Availability, access and any associated fees vary by property. Your Tour Director can assist with identifying the secure-storage options available at your accommodation.

When passports are being held by teachers or chaperones during international programs, they should be stored securely and managed according to the procedures outlined in the Lost Passport section of this guide.

Swimming Pools & Recreational Facilities

Some accommodations offer swimming pools, fitness facilities or other recreational amenities. Availability of these facilities does not mean that they are supervised, and lifeguards may not be present. Students should not use hotel recreational facilities without appropriate adult supervision and in accordance with school policies and any hotel rules

or restrictions. If your school has specific requirements regarding swimming activities or lifeguard supervision, these should be considered before permitting students to use the facility.

Before Hotel Departure

Before leaving an accommodation, each teacher or chaperone should inspect the rooms occupied by the students in his or her assigned group. Check for personal belongings, passports or valuables left in safes, chargers and electronics, damage to the room, and any other items that could create a problem after departure.

Any damage or outstanding charges should be addressed before leaving the property. Teachers should also physically verify possession of student passports when applicable, particularly when passports have been stored in room safes or distributed to students for the onward journey.



Meals

Meals are an important part of the travel experience, and food styles, portion sizes, ingredients and meal service may differ from what students are accustomed to at home. Encourage travelers to approach meals with flexibility and an open mind while understanding that group menus are generally arranged in advance and may offer limited choices.

Group Meals & Menu Options

Meals included in your program are arranged specifically for your group and may be served as a set menu, buffet or limited-choice menu depending upon the destination and restaurant. In some cases, the same meal may be served to the entire group.

Travelers wishing to purchase food or beverages beyond what is included in the program are welcome to do so at their own expense where available. Alcoholic beverages are not included in program costs and must be purchased separately by adults permitted to do so under local law and school policy.

Dietary Requirements

All dietary requirements and food allergies must be reported accurately during registration and prior to travel. This information allows STEM Study Tours to advise our accommodation, restaurant and other meal providers of the group's known requirements in advance.

We will work with our suppliers to accommodate documented dietary needs whenever reasonably possible, including vegetarian, vegan, allergy-related, religious and other dietary requirements. However, available substitutions and menu choices may be limited and will vary by destination and supplier. While an appropriate meal option may be provided, we cannot guarantee a selection of choices or individual meal preferences. Travelers who prefer a different meal are welcome to purchase an alternative at their own expense, where available.

Travelers should not wait until arrival to request a different meal preference. Last-minute changes may not be available and, where an additional meal must be purchased or specially prepared, additional charges may apply.

WHY THIS MATTERS | Dietary Needs Must Be Reported in Advance

Group meals are often planned and prepared in advance based on the dietary information provided for registered travelers. Allergies and dietary requirements must be reported accurately before travel so that we have the opportunity to communicate them to the appropriate suppliers. Options may be limited at some destinations, and last-minute requests or changes may not be available. Travelers who prefer a different meal from an appropriate option provided for them may purchase an alternative at their own expense, where available.

Meals Around Arrival & Departure

Depending upon flight schedules and the specific program, a meal may not be included on the day of arrival or during an early-morning departure. In other cases, a boxed or takeaway meal may be arranged when a traditional meal service is impractical.

Trip Leaders should review the final itinerary before travel so they understand which meals are included, particularly on arrival and departure days. When a meal is not included, travelers should be prepared to purchase food independently as needed.

Meal Times

Meal times are coordinated around the group's scheduled activities, transportation and the operating requirements of the restaurant or accommodation. Once arranged, significant changes may not always be possible. If a change becomes necessary during the program, please discuss it with your Tour Director, who will determine what options may be available.

TEACHER TIP | Prepare Students for Different Foods

Encourage students before departure to expect meals that may look, taste or be served differently from meals at home. Group travel is also an opportunity to experience the local culture through food, and a little preparation can help students approach unfamiliar dishes with curiosity rather than expectation. Students with documented dietary requirements should understand what has been requested on their behalf, while travelers who simply prefer different foods should be prepared to purchase alternatives at their own expense when available.

Your Tour Director

Your Tour Director is your primary on-tour contact and serves as the operational link between your group, STEM Study Tours and the suppliers providing the various components of your program. Their focus is on helping your itinerary run smoothly, responding to issues as they arise and supporting the Trip Leader throughout the journey.

Your Tour Director works closely with accommodations, transportation providers, activity suppliers, instructors, restaurants, guides and other program partners to help coordinate the services included in your itinerary. They are also an important resource when unexpected situations arise and will work with our Operations team to assist your group whenever needed.



Tour Director vs. Local Guide

Your Tour Director should not necessarily be considered a local or sightseeing guide. Their primary role is program operations and group support, rather than providing destination commentary or specialized local knowledge.

Where included in your program, local or national guides and other specialists may provide destination-specific interpretation, sightseeing commentary or subject expertise. If you have a question your Tour Director cannot answer, they will assist in identifying the appropriate resource whenever possible.

When You Need Assistance

If something is not operating as expected, please tell your Tour Director as soon as possible. Whether the concern involves an accommodation, meal, transportation service, activity or another component of your program, early communication provides the best opportunity for the issue to be addressed while you are still traveling.

Your Tour Director will work with the appropriate supplier and our Operations team to seek a reasonable solution. Please understand that some requests, particularly changes involving scheduled activities, transportation or supplier reservations, remain subject to supplier availability and cannot always be accommodated.

Emergencies & Medical Situations

During an emergency, your Tour Director will assist with coordination, communication and operational arrangements as appropriate. If a student requires medical care or must remain behind from the group's scheduled activities, a teacher or school-appointed chaperone must accompany and remain responsible for the student. The Tour Director will generally remain with the remainder of the group so that the scheduled program can continue whenever reasonably possible. Where additional transportation is required, the Tour Director may assist with identifying or coordinating appropriate transportation; however, teachers and chaperones are responsible for accompanying the student and managing the student's medical needs.

Student Supervision

Tour Directors are not members of the school's supervisory staff and may not assume responsibility for the supervision or care of students. Teachers and school-appointed chaperones remain responsible for their students throughout the program, including at accommodations, activities, recreational facilities, shopping or free-time opportunities and during situations involving illness or injury. A Tour Director should therefore never be included when calculating the school's required student-to-adult supervision ratio or used as a substitute for a teacher or chaperone.

Medication & Medical Supplies

Tour Directors may not provide, supply or administer medication to any student under any circumstances, including common over-the-counter medications such as aspirin or other pain relievers. This applies even when the Tour Director personally has the requested medication or supplies available. Teachers and school-appointed chaperones are responsible for obtaining and administering any medication needed by their students in accordance with school policy and the student's medical information and permissions.

If medication or medical supplies must be purchased during the program, the teacher or school-appointed chaperone is responsible for obtaining them. Your Tour Director may assist with identifying an appropriate pharmacy, medical facility or other resource, but may not purchase or provide medication on behalf of a student.

Personal Purchases & Alcohol

Tour Directors may not purchase personal items on behalf of travelers. Under no circumstances may a Tour Director purchase alcohol of any kind for a group member, even when the purchase is intended for an adult traveler and the traveler provides the funds. Adults wishing to purchase beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages must make those purchases independently and in accordance with local law and school policy.

Additional Transportation

Tour Directors generally do not have personal transportation available during the program. If a Tour Director does have access to a personal or rental vehicle, company liability requirements prohibit them from transporting group members in that vehicle. This includes transportation for medical needs, errands, shopping or other personal purposes.

When transportation outside the scheduled program is required, the group must use an appropriate independent transportation service, such as a taxi, rideshare, public transportation or other locally available service. Your Tour Director may assist with identifying or coordinating transportation where needed, but any associated costs remain the responsibility of the traveler and/or school unless otherwise provided as part of the program.

Mobile Phones & Connectivity

Tour Directors use their personal mobile phones, which are not company-issued devices. Teachers and group members should not request to use a Tour Director's personal phone because they do not have mobile service or international

calling access. Trip Leaders should arrange appropriate mobile and/or data service before departure so they can communicate independently throughout the program.

Your Feedback

Your feedback plays an important role in helping us monitor your experience while you are traveling and continually improve our programs. Partway through your tour, the Trip Leader will be asked to complete a brief Mid-Trip Report. This provides an opportunity to let us know how the program is progressing and, most importantly, to identify any concerns that may need attention while there is still time for our team to address them.

Please do not wait until the Mid-Trip Report if an issue requires immediate attention. Concerns involving accommodations, meals, transportation, activities or other program services should be brought to your Tour Director as soon as they arise so that assistance can begin promptly.

Following your return, we will also ask you to complete an End-of-Trip Report providing feedback on your overall experience. Your comments help us evaluate our suppliers, programs and services and continue improving the experiences we provide.

TEACHER TIP | Keep Your Director Informed

Your Tour Director can best support your group when they know about concerns as soon as they arise. If something does not appear right, a student becomes ill, a supplier concern develops or you anticipate needing assistance, communicate early rather than waiting until the situation becomes more difficult to resolve. Your Tour Director is there to help coordinate solutions while you remain responsible for the supervision and care of your students.

We're Here to Support You

Your Tour Director and our Operations Team are there to support you throughout your journey. If you have a question, concern or need assistance at any point during your program, please communicate with us as soon as possible. Direct and timely communication gives us the best opportunity to help, address concerns and keep your program running smoothly. We value the trust you place in us and look forward to working together to create a safe, successful and memorable experience for you and your students.

Your STEM Study Tours Team



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