



Millions of UK parents expect their child's school trip to be organised by an ABTA Member

- *Schools are being urged to book trips with an ABTA approved travel company to ensure support, protection and expertise*
- *Many schools are unaware they may be liable if they organise the travel arrangements themselves*

ABTA – The Travel Association is today releasing new findings, revealing that nearly three quarters (73%)¹ of UK families expect a company that organises school travel to be an ABTA Member.

There are more than 100 school travel organisers who are ABTA Members and booking through a school travel specialist allows teachers to access the company's expertise, knowledge and insight in developing an enjoyable educational experience.

ABTA approved travel companies also have access to the association's support and expertise – including 24 hour crisis support – and schools can benefit from ABTA's advice and its independent complaints process should they need it.

Booking an overnight school trip as a package - where a travel company organises the different travel services - provides the greatest overall protection.

Under the Package Travel Regulations (PTRs) the travel company is responsible for sorting out any problems², and making sure that if the trip can't go ahead for any reason either an alternative is offered or a full refund provided. In addition, if the travel company goes out of business before the trip starts pupils will get their money back and, where the trip included transport, will be brought home at no additional cost if they are already away.

It's also important for schools to be aware that if a school organises a trip themselves by arranging their own bookings for transport, accommodation and other services, they might be liable under the PTRs. This means that they would have all of the responsibilities of a travel company – both legal and financial.

There have been cases where children's school trips were cancelled and parents lost money when the trip was not covered by the PTRs. Last year pupils from a school in Kent lost tens of thousands of pounds raised for a package trip to Mount Kilimanjaro, when the company arranging the expedition collapsed financially³.

Victoria Bacon, ABTA's Director of Brand and Business Development, said:

"School trips provide pupils with lifelong memories and often an opportunity to explore a place they've never been to before. However, it can be a time consuming and sometimes daunting process for teachers to arrange these trips, and the new Package Travel Regulations means that if a trip is booked in a certain way, the school could be held liable should there be a problem.

"There are lots of ABTA school travel specialist companies who can take these responsibilities off the

hands of teachers and pull together a trip which provides a great education experience as well as offering the support, protection and expertise that comes with booking with an ABTA approved travel company.

“With this peace of mind teachers can travel with confidence, knowing their students are in good hands and able to enjoy their travel experience to the full.”

All School Travel Forum (STF) Members, which is a professional trade association for school travel, are required to be ABTA Members.

Gill Harvey of the School Travel Forum said:

“While organising a school trip can be seen by some education providers as stressful and time consuming, there are ways to streamline the process and recruit third party help to ensure the trip runs smoothly.

“Research shows that travel helps children to develop their sense of independence, experience new cultures and bond with their classmates. Booking with an STF Member, which is also an ABTA Member, will provide teachers and parents alike with the confidence of a safe and successful trip.”

ABTA’s top tips for schools arranging a trip:

- Reassure parents with careful planning and clear communication throughout the trip, from the point of booking to the moment of return.
- Check the Foreign Commonwealth Office Travel Advice for the country you intend to visit at an early stage of planning for the trip, as well as closer to the departure date. The advice can be found at: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
- Ensure that all those travelling have adequate travel insurance. Check that any specific or unusual activities are covered.
- Check passport and visa requirements well in advance. Ensure that everyone has a valid passport and that they have enough time left on them before they expire. Some countries require a minimum of six months’ time prior to expiry.
- Ask to see your chosen tour operator’s health and safety credentials and check they acknowledge the importance of maintaining these standards throughout the trip.
- Book arrangements with an ABTA Member to benefit from the protection, support and expertise they provide

Ends

Notes to editors

¹Research was conducted by Arkenford Ltd (www.arkenford.co.uk) who specialise in leisure and tourism market research. The ABTA Consumer Trends survey generated responses from a nationally representative sample of 2,001 consumers using an online research methodology and related to holiday booking habits in the 12 months to August 2018. Fieldwork was conducted between the end of July and beginning of August 2018. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

²Only trips lasting more than 24 hours, or including an overnight stay, are covered under the Package Travel Regulations. Visit the ABTA website for more information on PTRs: www.abta.com/tips-and-advice/is-my-holiday-protected/new-package-travel-regulations

³ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-43105004

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About ABTA

ABTA has been a trusted travel brand for over 65 years. Our purpose is to help our Members to grow their businesses successfully and sustainably, and to help their customers travel with confidence.

The ABTA brand stands for support, protection and expertise. This means consumers have confidence in ABTA and a strong trust in ABTA Members. These qualities are core to us as they ensure that holidaymakers remain confident in the holiday products that they buy from our Members.

We help our Members and their customers navigate through today's changing travel landscape by raising standards in the industry; offering schemes of financial protection; providing an independent complaints resolution service should something go wrong; giving guidance on issues from sustainability to health and safety and by presenting a united voice to government to ensure the industry and the public get a fair deal.

ABTA has around 1,200 Members, with a combined annual UK turnover of £38 billion. For more details about what we do, what being an ABTA Member means and how we help the British public travel with confidence visit www.abta.com.