



# Safety Management System



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# 1. Introduction

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Voyager School Travel is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our clients. Our Safety Management System (SMS) takes all reasonable steps to ensure this is achieved and has been developed in conjunction with our suppliers and after receiving advice from relevant recognised bodies including Argent Health & Safety group. Voyager School Travel complies in full with guidance on school visits and is externally verified on an annual basis.

Voyager School Travel:

- Ensure suppliers provide signed confirmation that they comply with EU legislation, plus national or local government regulations in regard to fire, other safety standards and hygiene.
- Provides a contract to all our suppliers of accommodation and transport detailing what is expected of them.
- Ensure company staff receive suitable training on carrying out assessment of suppliers.
- Ensure that company staff are trained to respond quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency.
- Undergoes a comprehensive external verification on an annual basis by suitably qualified consultants.

The review and updating of this system is ongoing and carried out in conjunction with advice from external consultants.



Nigel English  
Managing Director

## 2. SMS Implementation and Review

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Only competent and suitably trained individuals will be appointed to implement the requirements of the SMS.

Adequate resources will be provided to implement the requirements of the SMS.

All staff are formally made aware of the remit of the SMS and the need to report any situation that has the potential for danger as well as any identified weaknesses in the SMS itself.

Health & Safety is included in the agenda of every Board meeting.

The SMS is formally reviewed on an annual basis by the Directors and our systems and processes will be independently assessed and verified by suitably qualified external Health & Safety Consultants. The responsibility for Health & Safety and adhering to the STF & LOtC are Louise Richardson & Tricia Bryant.

## 3. Staff Training

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### 3.1 SMS Awareness Training

All staff are made aware of the scope and principal commitments we make in our SMS policy document in a way which is commensurate with their role.

### 3.1 Auditor Training

All in-house auditors will complete an initial training course delivered by Argent Health & Safety group. Auditors will then receive 'update' training as and when it is identified by the monitoring of health and safety or recommended by Argent Health & Safety group.

A record is kept of all training undertaken.

### 3.2 Emergency Procedure Training

All staff receive training in the company's emergency procedures.

## 4. Accommodation

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4.1 Each accommodation unit used in our programme has signed an accommodation contract or agent agreement confirming the accommodation conforms to local and national fire, safety and hygiene standards and will have current liability insurance cover for the duration of the contract.

4.2 Prior to being used for the first time, all accommodation will be subject to an accommodation audit of every aspect of fire safety, security, hygiene and the centres general facilities. The audit will be completed by Voyager School Travel personnel, the accommodation centre manager or an agent.

4.3 Accommodation will be subject to re-audit at a maximum interval of 3 years.

4.4 Where an accommodation unit is used more than 5 times in a single twelve month period, an audit will be carried out 'in situ' by an appropriately qualified auditor.

4.5 The results of the audit will be assessed by suitably qualified members of Voyager School Travel. Any areas of concern will instigate the appropriate action.

4.6 Following assessment of the audit, accommodation will be classified in one of the following categories:

- **Conforms.** No areas of improvement have been identified.
- **Minor Non-Conformities.** The audit has identified room for improvement, but the building is not unsafe. The defects will be brought to the attention of the accommodation management and use of the unit will be reviewed after 3 months if remedial action has not been taken. Relevant information is passed onto the party leader.
- **Does Not Conform.** The accommodation will not be used and will not be reconsidered for use until defects have been rectified and the property has been re-audited and either conforms or has minor non-conformities.

4.7 A Director of Voyager School Travel will regularly review each audit and the subsequent assessment.

## 5. Transport

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### 5.1 British Coaches

Voyager School Travel endeavour to select coach companies who belong to recognised industry bodies such as the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), Guild of British Coach Operators or are Coach Marque accredited operators.

All coach companies used will sign a coach contract confirming they comply with all national, local, trade and other laws, regulations, rules and codes of practice. The contract also stipulates a set of safety standards regarding driver's hours, driver vetting, insurance cover and vehicle age.

Coach operators used more than 5 times in a year will have an 'in situ' audit once every 3 years. Coach operators used less frequently will complete a self-audit. Both will forward copies of their operating licence, motor vehicle and public liability insurance.

Seat belts will be available for all passengers on British coaches.

Tour itineraries are agreed with the coach company to ensure the requirements of EU Drivers' Hours legislation is adhered to.

Should the coach breakdown on tour, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure all clients are safe and disruption to the itinerary is kept to a minimum. All coach operators have 24 hour European Breakdown cover. In the unlikely event the coach needs to be replaced, this may be from an un-audited company due to the unusual circumstances and seat belts can not be guaranteed as they are not a legal requirement in some European countries.

### 5.2 Overseas Coach Companies

Voyager School Travel only work with reputable overseas coach operators who themselves or if booked via an agent, the agent, sign a coach contract confirming they comply with all national, local, trade and other laws, regulations, rules and codes of practice. Seatbelts are not a legal requirement in some countries and thus cannot be guaranteed.

### 5.3 Air

Voyager School Travel holds an Air Travel Organisers License (ATOL) no. 9817. All air transport to and from the UK is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority and the Department of Transport. These bodies operate to strict safety criteria and no additional practical measures can be undertaken by Voyager School Travel.

### 5.4 Ferries and Eurotunnel

All ferries and Eurotunnel are regulated nationally and because of the technical nature of their safety standards, it is not possible for us to audit them.

#### 5.5 Rail Transportation

All rail transport is regulated nationally by the countries through which a train travels and because of the technical nature of their safety standards, it is not possible for us to audit them.

#### 5.6 Public Transport

All public transport is regulated nationally and it is not possible for us to audit public transport.

## 6. Snow Sports

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### 1. Standard Package

1.1 Helmets and 4 hours tuition should be offered as standard, with an opt-out option where appropriate.

### 2. Snowsports Instruction

2.1 All instructors will be qualified according to local and national regulations and approved by the Director of the local snow sport school.

2.2 Members must clarify the arrangements for snowsports classes in advance. E.g. class sizes and class sharing arrangements.

### 3. Equipment Hire

3.1 A written contract will be in place with equipment hire shops specifying the following conditions. The tour operator will regularly check that these conditions are being met.

3.2 Equipment is of an acceptable standard.

3.3 Only staff who are suitably competent will undertake the fitting of equipment.

3.4 The bindings must be fitted with due consideration to the age, weight, height and ability of the participant and the manufacturer's instructions. Records must be kept in case of accident investigation.

3.5 Boots must be dry and in full working order with no significant damage that could reduce performance. All fastenings must be fully functioning.

3.6 Skis and boots should be easily identifiable so that children do not try to use the wrong equipment.

### 4. Standard Of Up-Lift & Runs

4.1 All ski lift systems will comply with and be licensed according to local regulation.

4.2 Resort lifts will be assessed by the STF member as suitable for school and youth groups, particularly beginners.

4.3 The member will bring to the attention of the Party Leader any chairlifts without foot rests or restraining bars, and any old style T-Bars or draglifts crossing steep or difficult terrain (particularly when the piste cannot easily be reached by fallers).

4.4 Both lift system and runs, particularly nursery slopes, should be able to absorb high season visitors without causing dangerous overcrowding.

#### 5. Transport

5.1 In addition to the conditions for transport provision coaches for school ski courses must be properly equipped for winter conditions in particular including snow chains and appropriate anti-freeze systems.

#### 6. Resort

6.1 Board and accommodation should be appropriate to a mountain environment in winter conditions.

6.2 Guidance will be given on appropriate clothing for winter conditions.

## 7. Visits and Excursions

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Voyager School Travel will take all reasonable steps to obtain from providers of visits and excursions, evidence that Health and Safety has been evaluated. Wherever possible, information will be provided to party leaders so they can make informed decisions for their group.

Party leaders are responsible for ensuring their students are fully supervised at all times and that any instructions or safety briefings are followed. Where any safety equipment is provided, party leaders must ensure it is worn correctly by all members of the group, at all times. Further guidance can be obtained from the DfES and respective LEA.

### 7.1 Code of Conduct for School Groups

The party leader and accompanying staff are responsible for the members of their group and at all times remain in loco parentis. Voyager employees are unable to take any responsibility for students and students' actions as by law only qualified teachers are allowed to act in loco parentis.

At least one member of staff must accompany the group members on all programmed activities including evening activities run by Voyager employees. In the case of activity sessions or lessons run by qualified instructors (such as ski lessons) a member of staff need not be with the group if this is agreed with the instructor beforehand, and if this is permitted by the relevant education authority or board of governors. In this case the instructor should be advised how a member of staff can be contacted in case of difficulty, and a member of staff must be present at the start and finish of the activity to liaise with the instructor.

The party leader and staff are responsible for maintaining discipline amongst the group in any activity, including those led by a qualified instructor or by a Voyager employee. If the instructor is concerned about the behaviour of any party member he or she may make a decision, in conjunction with a member of staff, to withdraw that member from the activity. If a member of staff is concerned about the safety or behaviour of a member of the group, they should if necessary withdraw the member from the activity, informing the instructor where applicable.



Voyager employees, even those who have been subject to enhanced CRB checks, can at no time be left alone with a minor. The party leader and staff should liaise with the coach drivers (where applicable) and must heed their advice regarding driver's hours regulations.

The party leader is responsible for ensuring that all members of the party have a valid passport and visa if necessary.

The party leader should provide Voyager with an emergency contact number in the UK (often the school head) who can be reached in case of delay or accident. In addition the party leader should have emergency contact details for the parents/carers/guardians of all members of the party, including partners and/or next of kin for staff.

All members of the group must obey the rules and/or guidelines of the accommodation where they are staying and must respect the needs of other guests. Any damage to hotel property is the responsibility of the group members and must be settled in resort, unless a written guarantee of payment is received from the school head or deputy head. If payment cannot be made or guaranteed it may be necessary to involve the local police to resolve the issue.

All members of the group must respect the regulations in force at any excursion location (such as museums, churches, nature reserves) and during all activities.

## 8. Pre-tour Inspection Visits

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Voyager School Travel offers party leaders the facility to visit their chosen destination prior to the group's departure, for the purposes of assessing the accommodation, excursions and other venues. Voyager provides free of charge, 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a twin room, at or near the group's accommodation for party leaders with a confirmed booking. Travel and other costs are not included.

## 9. Accidents and Incidents

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Voyager School Travel encourages party leaders to report any safety related issues immediately via its 24 emergency helpline. Voyager School Travel investigates any such issues straight away, with any necessary remedial action taken as a priority.

Voyager will keep a record of all incidents brought to its attention and where appropriate, an investigation will be undertaken and any learning implemented and shared with the appropriate suppliers / groups.

## 10. Emergency Procedures

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Voyager School Travel maintains and updates an Emergency Procedure Practical Guide which defines the roles of staff in the event of a serious incident involving Voyager School Travel clients on tour.

A roster of Duty Officers is established to ensure that a member of the Voyager team is contactable 24 hours per day. All group leaders, drivers of coaches and agents are provided with these details should the need arise as suggested in DfES and LEA guidelines. In addition, contact details for the Managing Director of Voyager School Travel are also provided as back up.

A duty kit will be provided to each of the Duty Officers which includes amongst other things, details of the current groups on tour and emergency contact details for suppliers.

## 11. Insurance

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Voyager School Travel has Tour Operators Combined Liability Insurance which provides cover of up to £10,000,000 and includes a clause giving 'indemnity to principal'.

Comprehensive travel insurance is included in the price of all Voyager School Travel tours, unless specifically excluded at the request of the party leader.

## 12. Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

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Voyager School Travel's bought-in activity providers are subject to provision of appropriate operating licenses and suitable levels of Public Liability Insurance. Compliance with the standards set out by the appropriate National Governing Body or Licensing Authority will be adopted as the appropriate minimum safety standard.

Voyager School Travel's bought in activity providers [including ski schools] operate a policy for staff recruitment, training and assessment in line with relevant NGB's guidelines. Instructors with a responsibility for participants are deemed competent to undertake their duties by way of the qualifications they hold and the ongoing assessment they undergo.

These Providers, have a written code of practice for activities which is consistent with guidelines of the relevant NGB's. Instructor competencies are confirmed by way of their NGB qualifications.

Where there is no National Governing Body for an activity, the provider has a code of conduct for that activity which is in line with current good practice within the UK and/or overseas location, and this includes assessing appropriate instructor competencies.

Instructors are practiced and assessed to be competent in accident and emergency procedures, with most NGB's insisting on a current first aid qualification.

There is a clear definition of responsibilities between providers and visiting staff regarding supervision and welfare of participants. See section 6.

All equipment used in activities is suited to task, adequately maintained in accordance with statutory requirements and current good practice, with records kept of maintenance checks where necessary.

Where Activity Providers are not able to meet the requirements of customers who have 'Special Needs', Voyager will endeavour to identify the lack of facilities in advance of the booking. (The customer/client is obligated to bring to the attention of Voyager any special requirements at the time of the initial booking).