



TRAVEL INFORMATION SHEET – USA

Helping you travel with
confidence

Greetings from the Visions in Education Operations Department! We are delighted that you have elected to travel with us and hope that your upcoming trip will be your best school trip yet. This memorandum is to notify you of the items required to ensure your trip runs successfully. Please read carefully and let us know if you have any questions or need our assistance in any way.

Please be aware that the PIB has a specific due date. If documents are not submitted in their entirety with all elements completed by the due date, you will not be eligible to qualify for our cash back scheme. We very strongly urge you to collect passport copies when signing pupils up for the trip so as not to jeopardise potential benefits.

Flights

If travelling via flight, please know that your specific flight details are generally available approximately 60-days prior to departure. Please also understand that although we always try to ensure your preferences are achieved, we may only guarantee that flights are ticketed as per the general itinerary noted (departure from a general area – i.e. London, not Gatwick or Heathrow specifically). Additionally, we are not able to guarantee direct flights as a standard practice. If you prefer to ensure a direct flight, please discuss this with your Travel Advisor. In most cases, if a direct flight is requested and available, additional fees will be assessed by the airlines.

Please also be aware that although airlines will give us general routes, flight numbers and timings, these are not guaranteed until approximately one week prior to travel when final tickets are issued. Airlines reserve the right to make changes to layover cities, timings and flight numbers until final tickets are issued. This said, if we are able to let you know specific flight details earlier than normal, please understand that these may change up to the time of travel as they are at the discretion of the airlines. The airlines are also responsible for deciding how long of layover times will be required in specific cities and a variety of other factors.

Passport Questions

It's important to note that some countries do require a certain period of validity on passports after your proposed date of exit from the country.

We strongly recommend visiting the website of the [FCDO website](#) for the most up-to-date information on passport requirements.

And if you have any passengers who are not British citizens, we would recommend that they contact the relevant embassy for information specific to them.

It's also advisable that you make a photocopy of everyone's passport before you travel. It might also be worth making a second copy that you can keep at school. This could help in the case of any lost or stolen passports.

Waivers

If you are travelling to a destination located in the Americas (USA, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico or Ecuador), please know that waivers will usually be required for your school. Waivers are forms that will need to be signed by each parent/legal guardian in order to allow your students to participate in some activities. Please check with us to determine if waivers will be required for any of your activities. If they are, these will be emailed to you. When you travel, each student will need to be able to produce the signed copy of the waiver to participate in the activity.

Visas

With regards to visas, again, the [website of the FCDO](#) has the most up-to-date information regarding requirements – and those who are not British citizens should certainly check requirements with the relevant embassy, as with passport validity.

If travelling to the USA, you won't need a visa (if you are a British citizen or an eligible national of a Visa Waiver Program country) but you will need an in-date [ESTA](#).

ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation – travel to USA only)

In addition to ensuring that all passport requirements are met, persons visiting the USA must apply online for ESTA prior to travel:

ELECTRONIC SYSTEM for TRAVEL AUTHORISATION - ESTA

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> & www.usembassy.org.uk

All passengers eligible for travel to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must receive online approval a minimum of 72-hours prior to departure. The Visa Waiver Programme offers entry into the US without the need for a visa to travellers from selected countries. UK passport holders may travel under this programme, however if a different passport is held you will need to check with the US Embassy about eligibility. The current list of countries covered can be found on the website shown above. Boarding/entry on arrival in the US may be denied if you have not received approval.

The website itself is clear and concise and takes you step-by-step through the process of registering your details in order to travel to the USA. Application takes just a few moments; please ensure that you have your passport in hand when logging in. If you get a new passport after receiving approval (lost/stolen/expired) you **MUST** re-apply as the document details will have changed. You will not be able to travel without your approval matching exactly the details shown in your passport. All passengers to the USA must have an ESTA approval code a minimum of 72-hours prior to departure in order to board the plane. Failure to do so may result in denied boarding and/or entry. An approval does not guarantee entry at Customs & Immigration. It is up to all groups to ensure that each passenger has completed the form and received the necessary approval before travel. To apply, general costs are \$40 USD and the ESTA approval is valid for a 2-year period.

Seatbelts on Coaches in North & Central America

Please be advised that in the Americas, coaches do not have seatbelts. If this is a condition of travel, please alert us when booking and we can attempt to source this on your behalf. Current fees for motorcoaches outfitted with seatbelts generally run from £200+ in additional costs which would be billed to your school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We know you want to minimize any potential issues and/or delays so appreciate your assistance. As always, if we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.