



Risk Management Considerations for International Educational Tours

International educational tours give teachers and students the opportunity to experience different cultures, new languages and discover historical sites firsthand. It is important to take the necessary safety measures for each phase of your trip. Be aware and investigate the possible dangers of the international experience to make it one you want to remember.

Phase 1 – Planning

Gather the facts about your chosen location. This includes:

- Safety and security information. Incident alerts and warnings are issued for countries by the Canadian Government. Stay educated on safe-zones and areas to avoid.
- Specific documentation and requirements to enter the country.
- Emergency services available and the location of the Canadian Consulate.
- Health precautions such as vaccinations and other health considerations. Avoid detainment situations by researching which medications can cross the border.
- Appropriate transportation.
- Historical sites and entertainment.
- Budget requirements (airfare and transfers, accommodation, planned group activities and free time, meals).

Phase 2 – Preparing for Departure Training

Pre-training workshops are recommended for students to prepare for health and wellness, travel, risk management, intercultural engagement, sexual violence and other relevant topics. Criminal background checks, valid first aid certifications, intensive annual training in safety and references before hire are recommended for teachers and group leaders.

Health and safety

Discuss with your students and their guardians any concerns relevant to travel such as medical history and medications, dietary and health issues, special needs. Encourage students to consult with a health care provider and obtain appropriate immunizations and disease prevention before travelling.

Insurance

Ensure that students have appropriate medical travel insurance and request certificates of insurance from all tour operators. If this is a new experience, check with your broker to make sure that all insurance needs are met.

Documents

Ensure all travellers have appropriate documents to travel including passports, medical insurance access cards, visas (work visas if required) and consent forms. Emergency contact information should be up to date prior to travelling.

Expectations

Set clear expectations for travellers' behaviour (curfew, rules, drinking, free time, etc.). Provide a final schedule

of planned activities and enforce security policies such as alcohol, hotel safety, swimming and free time activities.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are needed to ensure that students and staff are kept safe throughout the trip. Behaviour and abuse policies should be reviewed by staff and students prior to departure. Plans should be in place if a student's behaviour poses a risk to themselves, other students, workers or people in general.

Phase 3 – Time Abroad

Valuables

Thieves are aware that tourists may be carrying a large amount of cash. Valuables should be kept locked in a safe, and personal belongings should always be kept within sight. Students should keep money in travel pouches that can be worn under clothing.

Safety

Have measures in place to ensure the highest level of safety possible:

- Be aware of the type of transportation you are using. If you are using taxis, do your research on their reputation.
- Ensure that the hotel door is always locked, whether you are in or out of the room.
- Travel with important contact information and an Emergency Calling Instructions card which provides instructions on how to dial emergency numbers in the country you are visiting.
- Have a count off system in place to account for all students.
- Implement a travel buddy system so that nobody is left alone.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- There are minimum requirements for staff to student ratios. Ensure that your trip is appropriately supervised.

Phase 4 – Post-Travel

Identify the successes and challenges for future educational travelling:

- Have you organized a survey for students to complete for any suggestions?
- Have the students learned new skills, values, beliefs or behaviours? Do these skills, values, beliefs and behaviours conflict with their home culture?
- Can the students integrate their new experiences into their academic and professional life?
- Were there any difficulties such as accommodations, transportation, etc?
- Were there any concerns with personal safety?
- Did students have trouble coping with culture shock, relationships or homesickness? How was this handled?

Teaching staff owe a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of their students while on tour. Although plenty of research is recommended, common sense and awareness are also needed. Students will be distracted and may be unaware of the dangers around them. Always take the necessary safety precautions to prevent harm to you and your students.