



Ski trips (2025-2026)

Updated 1st September 2024

Important information for School Group leaders

Travel

Coach

Your travel arrangements are an important part of your tour, and it is our belief that you should **travel in comfort and safety**. An executive coach will be contracted for you, picking you up from the school and remaining with you throughout your trip. For clarification **'executive coach'** is an industry expression, which means that your coach will be equipped with seatbelts, toilet, stereo, air circulation system and often (but not always) with microphone, drinks machine and USB ports. It will almost certainly be 8 years old or less and be equipped and ready for Continental travel. Various coach sizes and capacities are available, typically from 40 seats up to an 89-seat double-decker. **Luggage capacity is limited**, regardless of the number of seats and you must pack accordingly. No hard-rimmed suitcases are allowed, and only soft-sided sports bags will be allowed and packed accordingly in the hold. A small carry-on item (handbag or back-pack) can be taken on with you for the journey, if it can be safely and comfortably stored on board. Occasionally, an oversized coach (those with 60+seats) may be fitted with a ski box or you may wish to pay extra for a trailer, although these are very limited and would need to be secured prior to the confirmation of your booking.

Tour drivers are an important part of the tour, so you should find your drivers to be friendly, experienced and reliable. Please bear in mind that a 'feeder' driver (that is someone who drives the UK leg down to Dover and back) is usually allocated for your group, so that the main trip drivers start (from Maidstone, Dover or even Calais) to comply with driver legal hours and restrictions. Where coach travel is provided by suppliers in overseas countries, we contract reputable local companies to handle all the necessary journeys as stipulated, but while they comply with local regulations, it is important to appreciate that these legal conformities may well be different to those here in the UK.

Ferry

We use **the ferry services** of P&O Ferries, DFDS and Irish Ferries from Dover to Calais (and sometimes Dunkirk) for our ski trips to the Continent. With refurbished and improved vessels, you can eat and drink on board in comfort as you sail across to the Continent. It is often possible to buy food vouchers from us for your crossing (s) prior to travel (supplement payable in advance), so please just ask if you would be interested. We occasionally also use the fast and popular **Eurotunnel service** from Folkestone to Calais. Regrettably, Eurotunnel policy is to no longer offer space to school group operators over peak dates (in February and at Easter), but off-peak this is sometimes possible on request. A supplement is sometimes required for groups wishing to use this service and as coach space is limited, availability may be requested but not guaranteed.

Flights

For **flight-inclusive packages**, we will always take into consideration your preferred departure airport and travel times, however these cannot be guaranteed. We work with **scheduled airlines** including BA, Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, KLM, Air France, Swiss Air, Ryanair, EasyJet, Jet2 and others as and when appropriate. However, a number of these (BA especially) no longer offer group space on peak dates and do not accept school groups over February half-term or at Easter, for example. As you will be aware, we often accept bookings in advance of airline schedules and route confirmations being released and both pricing and indeed availability will be unknown at that stage. We always do the best we can with the parameters and budgets that have been set. This also means that you may have a longer transfer in destination than may be ideal and we appreciate your flexibility and understanding. Please also bear in mind that there may be very little flexibility in booking seats with a number of these airlines. As such, any requests for passenger name changes after a booking has been received may well be subject to substantial amendment fees as imposed by the airlines and such conditions are outside of our control. The airlines have reduced capacity – and increased prices – since the pandemic, so we have less flexibility than before. Please beware of baggage restrictions pertaining to the airline you are travelling with as supplements and fees will apply to excess luggage and weight should you exceed your allowance. Our packages do not include the carriage of ski equipment which may be booked separately at a supplement.

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Accommodation

The accommodations that we feature have been **hand-picked** for our groups. These are subject to an **audit checklist** and reviewed by our staff or representatives to ensure their suitability. We visit these properties to **risk assess** and we encourage you to do the same in advance of the trip you run. Most bedrooms are en-suite (this means that they have a shower and usually a toilet in the room) although some hostels/sports hotels/youth accommodations may have bedrooms that are not en-suite i.e. with use of shared washroom or toilet facilities along the floor and not actually in the bedrooms. As local accommodation **classifications vary** in different countries, please read the descriptions carefully or ask us for further details before deciding whether a particular destination or accommodation is right for you and your group.

Meal plans

Different meal plans are available, so please check your Tour proposal for details of the meals that have been included in your package. These may be referred to as **room only/self-catering** (no meals included); **bed and breakfast** (only breakfast included); **half board** (breakfast and dinner included) or **full board** (breakfast, packed lunch and dinner included). Meals will be provided at your accommodation unless otherwise advised (but sometimes might be at a local restaurant for example).

Damage Deposits

Some accommodation providers require a **damage deposit** to be paid in advance or directly on arrival, refundable after the stay subject to an inspection of your rooms.

Tourist tax & City tax

Some countries/cities/resorts charge a city tax or tourist tax, which by law, are collected by the accommodation to pass on to the Authorities. This needs to be paid directly on arrival at the accommodation. Whenever possible we include these costs within your package, but this is not always allowed. Please check on your Inclusions for details and check with us first if you are at all unsure.

Ski trip Information

Ski Tuition

We only work with established and reputable **Ski Schools** in our resorts. All instructors used for school groups will be qualified according to local and national regulations (where they exist), be at or over the equivalent of BASI Alpine level 2 Instructor and approved by the Director of the local snow sport school. Occasionally external or British qualified instructors will also be used.

Our standard ski trip packages include 4 (or even 5) hours tuition on each of 5 or 6 days unless otherwise stated on your Proposal and Confirmation. Lessons are provided on the basis of 1 instructor to every 12 pupils (maximum) with locally approved qualified ski school instructors with a knowledge of the local area and/or British qualified instructors familiar with the terrain. Staff places and/or concessions do not count towards the instructor/pupil ratios. If agreed with the instructors you may, at your own discretion, request to vary the group sizes within your party, to take account of any uneven split of ages and abilities. Extra instructors may be available at a supplementary charge on request.

Typically (but not always) lessons will be in two-hour blocks. Each 2-hour instruction time allocation may be marginally less (often by 5 minutes or so) and as such end a little earlier than the allotted period, as local instructors may require time to transfer to another group or commitment, in accordance with local regulations. Our arrangements do not oblige our ski instructors to remain with your group during the lunch break although they may choose to do so. **School teachers remain 'in loco parentis.'** An extra hour of instruction (i.e. 5 hours instruction per day) can be organised at a supplement in many of our resorts on request, so please ask for a quotation if this is not already itemised on your Proposal. Occasionally, instruction may be in 2.5 hour or even 3-hour blocks subject to the availability of ski school instructors. Specific timings can be requested but not guaranteed - and flexibility is required, especially during peak periods.

Stay on piste

It is a condition of booking that as party leader, you agree that your pupils will ski or snowboard only on **marked and patrolled pistes** and be supervised at all times - either by your party's teachers, providing they are competent skiers, or by the appointed ski instructors contracted by us on your behalf. If school staff do not accompany the lessons, they must be accessible on the phone and within easy reach, in case of an emergency or accident.

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Ski Equipment

We only work with established and reputable ski hire shops and equipment providers. Each supplier has a written agreement with us that specifies the minimum safety and quality standards that we expect for our clients. Our standard ski trip packages include **the hire of skis and boots** for 5 (o 6) days, unless otherwise stated in your Proposal and Confirmation. As party leader you accept responsibility for ensuring that all your party is present at the appointed time for the safe fitting and collection of equipment and for the return of the same when appropriate and advised to do so. The condition of equipment should be checked prior to acceptance and again on return and any damages settled with the supplier direct if required.

Lost or damaged goods may be covered under **insurance**, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy, but will not cover you for neglect or inappropriate behaviour. Equipment, including details of sizes required must be ordered in advance to guarantee availability in resort. Those individuals requiring sizes larger than boot size 11 may wish to bring their own ski boots or certainly to advise us well in advance, as the stock of bigger sizes can be limited.

Helmets

There has been historical debate on whether the use of helmets for all snow-sports should be compulsory. Currently, it is law for young people under the age of 18 to wear helmets on the slopes Italy (fines of €150 for non-compliance) and for those under the age of 16 years old in Austria. The Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS) strongly recommends that all skiers and snowboarders, regardless of ability and age, use helmets. The AfPE (Association for Physical Education) has also advised its members that helmets should be worn. **We include the hire of helmets in all our packages as standard.** These will be fit for purpose and correctly fitted by specialist suppliers in resort.

It is our policy that it is **compulsory for all school groups** (students, teachers and reps) to wear helmets when skiing or snowboarding and we ask that this is respected in every destination.

Ski Passes

Many ski lift companies now require a **list of all pupils' names and dates of birth on school headed paper**, to be prepared in advance and brought with you as party leader, if not supplied in advance. Individual photos may also be required. The ski areas covered by lift passes as advised and advertised by us may occasionally be subject to change. Any such change resulting from amendments made by local lift companies or resort authorities is strictly outside our control and we can accept no responsibility for any reduction in ski area caused by any such amendment or decision.

Ski Reps

A rep is included as part of your package, and someone will be allocated to your group. While the precise role of the rep will vary from one destination to another, he or she will provide hands-on assistance with the organisation of your accommodation, ski and après ski arrangements, liaise with any suppliers and enhance your overall experience. The ski rep may travel out with you from the UK or meet with you on arrival in resort. The rep cannot act as a member of your staff or assume any 'loco parentis' responsibility for your students but will hopefully become an invaluable member of the support team during your stay. All reps, recruited by us or our local agents, are appointed for their suitability in working with school groups. All British reps, resident in the UK, are **DBS checked** in advance. They may help with your apres-ski arrangements, but the activities should be self-led by you.

Après Ski

Après ski (including but not limited to, swimming, ice-skating, pizza night, bowling and other events or activities), can often be organised and pre-paid in advance, or pre-booked to ensure availability if you prefer to pay in resort. However, even if these are paid for by us on your behalf or suggested by us, they are provided by **external independent** third-party suppliers. Any participation in these is entirely at your own risk. We can help with any Risk Assessment that you need to undertake if requested. We would advise you to do so well in advance in order to make an informed decision as to the suitability of any such activity for your group. We may sometimes refer to an **"in-house après-ski programme"** on your Proposal. In-house après-ski activities such as quiz nights, treasure hunts, use of cinema rooms or disco in the accommodation are often included in your package at no additional charge and can be organised with your rep. However, facilities and options vary from one venue to another, and you should ask us to clarify what might be available to you. In some hotels there are 'entertainments' provided by their own entertainment staff, but in other cases any activity (disco or karaoke for example) would need to be self-led by your own teachers in destination. Your rep will help - and we supply a quiz template in advance (although feel free to use your own if you prefer).

Please refer to our Destination Guide for details of options, prices and risk assessment considerations prior to booking any activities or deciding what best to do.

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Inspection trips

We strongly recommend that you undertake an **inspection visit** in advance of your trip in order to complete your own risk assessment documentation and to benefit from local orientation in resort. We are happy to organise an inspection trip for you which will include two free nights' accommodation in the destination where you have booked (or are intending to book) on a half board basis, inclusive of two free days ski lift pass and equipment hire for you as Group Leader. The cost of flights, transfers, personal expenditure and the costs for any additional members of staff is at your own expense. If you have not already booked your ski trip with us but are hoping to do so, then we are happy to facilitate the organisation of an inspection trip as shown above. Although in the first instance, you would need to pay for this yourself, we will reimburse you up to the value of £300 by way of a discount on your invoice, as and when you book the trip with us.

Staff family concessions

Discounted places for the Group Leader's spouse and children may be available on request. Please ask us for details.

Snowsport Course Organiser (SCO) Award

As the national governing body for skiing in England, **Snowsport England** recommends that all adults accompanying young people on ski trips should have attended an **SCO**. Please ask us for details of upcoming courses. The SCO Award does not qualify staff to supervise skiing. All staff wishing to consider supervision of skiing are very strongly advised to attend the Alpine Ski Course Leader Course and gain the **ASCL Award**.

Please ask us for further details or visit <http://www.uksnowsports.co.uk> for forthcoming courses and costs.

Staying Safe & Behaviour

Adults and children alike must take reasonable care for their own safety at all times. Being in a foreign environment on a trip can be very exciting, but any tour brings with it certain risks which you should attempt to minimise. Furthermore, in confirming the tour booking you are also agreeing to our terms and conditions with reference to the conduct of your group, including but not limited to damages and behaviour.

Group leaders should make pupils aware of particular slip, trip and fall hazards including warnings concerning slippery footpaths, walking in ski boots, traffic risks when disembarking from coaches and ski buses (especially when carrying skis or snowboards), falling icicles and freezing temperatures. Particular risks concerning après-ski activities such as ice-skating, tubing and tobogganing should also be fully assessed in advance. It must be remembered - and made absolutely clear to parents - that skiing has inherent risks, that falls will happen, and that people can get hurt through no fault of their own or anyone else.

As well as the importance of the right equipment and clothing, you should read and adhere to the **FIS Ski-way Code**, to ensure that skiers and boarders are in control and that their speed is limited to their ability and the situation.

FIS Ski-way Code

The International Ski Federation (FIS) operates the following **safety conduct code** applicable to all skiers or snowboarders, which is binding by law:

- 1) Respect for Others: Behave in such a way that does not endanger or prejudice other skiers or snowboarders.
- 2) Control of Speed: Adapt your speed to your ability, the prevailing conditions of terrain, and the density of traffic.
- 3) Choice of Route: Choose your route in such a way that you do not endanger other skiers or snowboarders ahead.
- 4) Overtaking: You may overtake to the left or right but leave enough space for others to continue their line.
- 5) Entering and Starting: Check up and down the slopes before starting off so not to endanger yourself or others.
- 6) Stopping on the Piste: Avoid stopping on the piste in narrow places or where visibility is restricted.
- 7) Climbing on Foot: When either climbing or descending on foot, keep to the side of the piste.
- 8) Respect for Signs: A skier or snowboarder must respect all signs and markings.
- 9) Assistance: At accidents, every skier or snowboarder is duty bound to assist.
- 10) Identification: Whether involved or a witness, you must identify yourself to others following an accident.

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Ski trip 'what to pack' checklist:

Here's a sample checklist below although you may wish to amend or use your own of course. Please also seek advice from a specialist ski apparel supplier for guidance on the purchase and hire of skiwear, clothing and recommended accessories. Consider carefully before deciding whether to bring valuable items which might get damaged, lost or stolen during the trip.

Ski Clothing

- Ski jacket (which may be hired in advance)
- Ski trousers or salopettes
- Micro-Fleece
- Waterproof ski gloves
- Thermal underwear/leggings
- Thermal tops (best to wear layers)
- Ski goggles (order those that sit over prescription glasses if required)
- Pairs of ski socks
- Ski gloves

Other Clothing

- Woolly hat
- Sturdy boots/snow boots
- Warm coat
- Shirts
- Underwear (including normal socks)
- Trousers/Jeans/Jogging bottoms
- Hoodie or sweatshirt
- Swimming trunks/costume
- Slippers/indoor shoes

Personal items

- Wash kit & tissues & travel-sick pills (if required)
- Towel(s)
- Water bottle (drink water regularly to prevent dehydration)
- Sunglasses
- Paper or notebook and pen/pencil

Essentials

- Passport
- GHIC (the replacement for the old EHIC)
- Travel insurance documentation
- Medication
- Small backpack
- European plug adaptor
- Sunscreen (high factor)
- After-sun cream/moisturiser
- Lip balm
- Travel sickness medication (if required)

Extras

- Phone (and gadget or device if you wish – making sure these are suitably insured)
- Camera (consider a disposable camera)
- Reading book
- Language phrase book
- Chargers for gadgets (if required)
- Wet wipes and hand sanitiser
- Waterproof watch
- Travel pillow

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Other Important Information

Please carefully read all the documents which we send to you by email, as they include important information which will help you in the planning and organisation of your trip. A Destination Guide is available for the resort and accommodation of your choice with further details on the resort, ski domain, risk assessment pointers, après-ski options and more. Furthermore, a selection of generic policy documents, safety guidelines, FIS Code of Conduct on the slopes and FCDO Travel Advice links are all available from our website.

Please visit: www.absolutetravel.co.uk/info-zone/planning-your-trip

Snow Conditions

We cannot accept responsibility for **snow or weather conditions** which may affect skiing, boarding, skating or other such activities during your trip. Should bad weather and local conditions dictate that your ski and/or other contracted activities not be possible, then we will attempt to organise for transfers within the region to accommodate you, subject to regional limitations. However, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible. You may be covered under your travel insurance for piste closure and/or any additional costs that may be incurred (see “Ski Pack” in your travel insurance wording), subject to the terms and conditions of your policy. The decision of the ski school or instructors on the suitability of snow conditions is final and we accept no responsibility for your party whatsoever for any action taken by you, which is not wholly in accordance with these conditions.

Waivers

We will advise groups in advance where the signature of a waiver by a Group Leader or parent may be required in resort or prior to travel. This is sometimes required in ski resorts in the USA for example. Notwithstanding the above, Group Leaders have the reassurance that the primary contract is with Absolute Travel and Tours Limited and is signed under English law. This means that the protection offered under the Package Travel Regulations takes precedence over local disclaimers that may be demanded in resort.

Winter Sports Travel Insurance

Winter Sports travel insurance is included in your package, unless you choose to opt out at the Booking stage. Please check all the policy details carefully to ensure that it meets your needs and make copies of the policy available to everyone covered as applicable. It is a condition of booking that everyone travel with adequate travel insurance. See our Booking Terms and Conditions for details. You can view the policy documents and Booking Terms and Conditions on our website by visiting: <https://www.absolutetravel.co.uk/info-zone/travel-aware>

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