

Halsbury Travel

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ORGANISING A SCHOOL TRIP



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Thank you for downloading
our Ultimate Guide to
Organising a School Trip!

We've been helping busy teachers (like you) to arrange school trips for nearly 40 years. So, we know that school trips take a lot of work to organise.

We've put this guide together to take you through all the key steps in planning your school trip. And we've included some useful hints and tips that we've picked up over the years.

We hope you find it useful. And don't forget, we're here to support you every step of the way – so, just get in touch if you need us.

The Halsbury Team



Contents

The Ultimate Guide to Organising a School Trip	2
Think About Your Trip	3
Get your trip approved	5
Get parents on board	6
Launch your trip	7
Start trip admin	8
Plan the finer details of the trip	9
Make the final arrangements	10
Get ready for your trip	11
Any other tips?	12

THINK ABOUT YOUR TRIP



Start planning early!

Our number one tip for planning school trips? **Start as early as possible.**

Here's why:

- You'll have a better chance of securing your preferred dates, transport, accommodation etc.
- It'll make your trip more affordable for your students (by giving them longer to pay for it).
- It'll make your life much easier by giving you plenty of time to plan your trip (and collect all the information you need from students and their parents).
- You'll get a head start on the competition from other trips – if another department is likely to run a trip targeting the same pool of students, planning early will mean you get in there first.

Decide what you want from your trip

Of course, you know why you want to run this trip. But making sure you have really clear objectives can save time (and avoid headaches) when planning the itinerary.

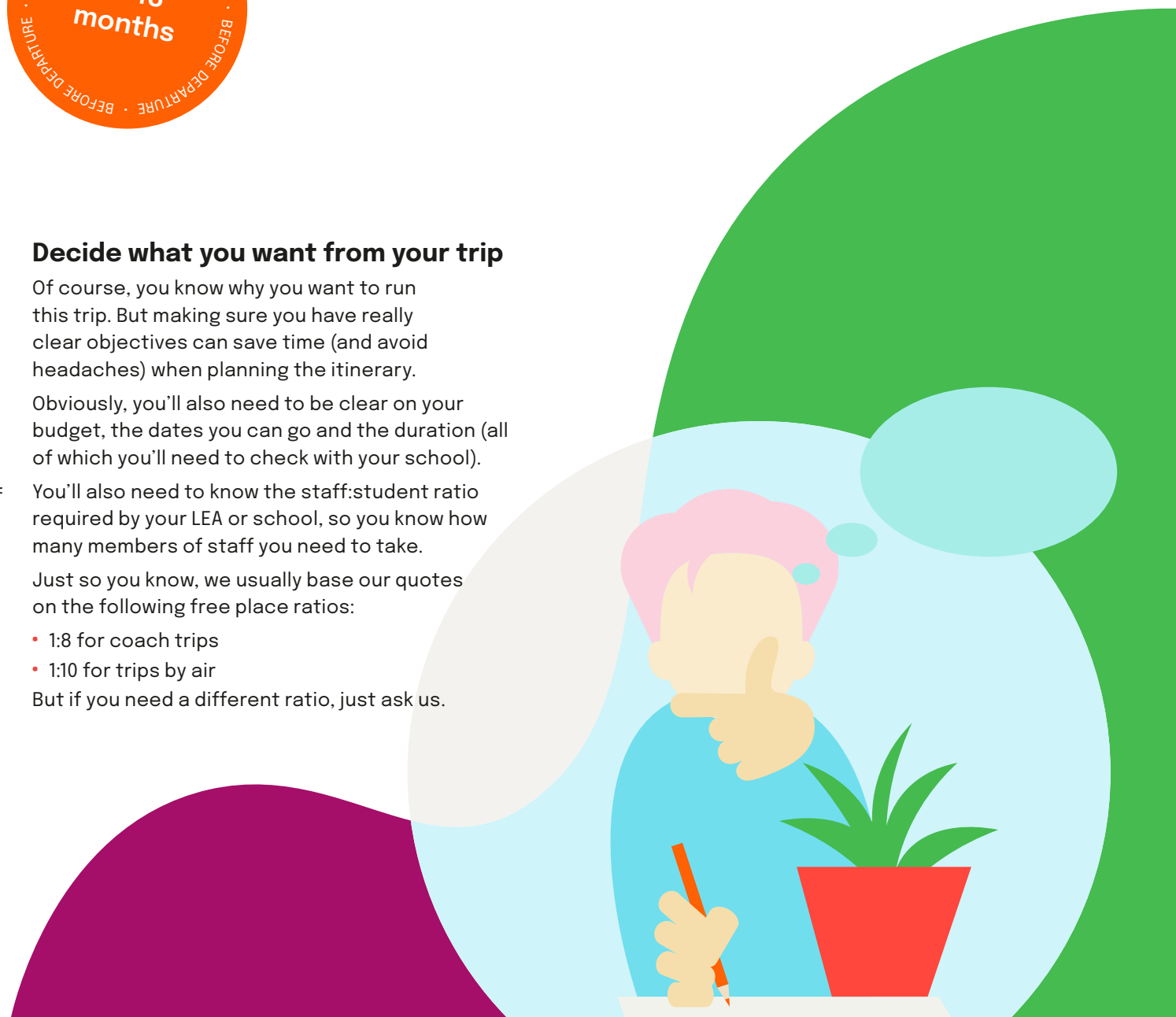
Obviously, you'll also need to be clear on your budget, the dates you can go and the duration (all of which you'll need to check with your school).

You'll also need to know the staff:student ratio required by your LEA or school, so you know how many members of staff you need to take.

Just so you know, we usually base our quotes on the following free place ratios:

- 1:8 for coach trips
- 1:10 for trips by air

But if you need a different ratio, just ask us.



Decide whether to organise your trip yourself or go with a tour operator

It's certainly possible to make all the arrangements for your school trip yourself.

You could organise your trip yourself. But there are many reasons why it makes sense to use a specialist school tour operator (like us).

Make sure your group is protected

Choosing a fully-accredited school tour operator (like Halsbury Travel) means your group will be better protected in the (unlikely) event that something goes wrong.

Of course, sometimes the unexpected does happen – but we've got a proven track record in quickly finding solutions, so you won't be left to deal with it on your own.

And our ABTA and ATOL protection means that your trip is financially protected.

Avoid the trip taking over your life

Choose to work with a specialist school tour operator and they'll take on the bulk of the organisational tasks (like booking accommodation, travel, meals, entrance tickets etc.).

We do this kind of stuff on a daily basis – so please do make use of us to make your life easier.

If your tour operator also happens to be a member of the School Travel Forum (like us), then they'll have a Safety Management System in place and will hold a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.

Why does that matter? Well, it'll drastically reduce the amount of paperwork you need to do and can form part of your risk assessment.

Plus, you won't need to seek further assurance that they actually provide the quality of tour they advertise (the LotC Quality Badge confirms they do), and you can be sure your group's health and safety will be prioritised.

Nothing will get 'lost in translation'

We're multilingual at Halsbury, so we can speak to suppliers in their own language and avoid any misunderstandings.

And we've worked hard to build good relationships with them, so that we can get the best for our groups.

Feel supported every step of the way

We know how much responsibility it is taking a group of kids abroad. So, perhaps the most important reason to choose a school tour operator is that you'll be supported every step of the way.

Decided to go with a tour operator? It's time to get a quote!

Got several quotes? The key thing to remember is to make sure you're comparing like-for-like.

Download our guide to comparing quotes »



GET YOUR TRIP APPROVED



Ready to present your school trip proposal?
You'll need to answer a few key questions.

What's the value of your trip?

If you're travelling during term time, you'll be asking to take students and a number of staff off timetable for several days. And if you're planning on travelling during the holidays, you'll be asking colleagues to give up their well-earned rest.

Either way, you'll need to demonstrate that your trip is worth it.

It should be fairly easy to explain the educational value of your trip – after all, you'll have chosen it to support your learning objectives.

But don't forget about the other benefits that school trips abroad offer – like greater independence and responsibility, and deepening intercultural understanding.

And there are specific benefits for music tours, sports tours and ski trips, of course.

We've created a [video](#) and a [PowerPoint](#) presentation to help get you started with this.

How will you keep the students safe?

You'll need to show that you've considered how you'll ensure the health and safety of your group and this ultimately means performing a [risk assessment](#).

Unfortunately, we can't do your risk assessment for you – only you know your group's requirements.

But booking with a school tour operator that's an Assured Member of the School Travel Forum and holds a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge (like us) will significantly lighten your workload.

We'll explain more about risk assessments later in this guide.

How reliable is your chosen tour operator?

You'll need to show your chosen tour operator is reputable, fully accredited and will prioritise the health and safety of students.

If you've chosen Halsbury Travel as your tour operator, you may find [this handout](#) useful.

[See more of our top tips »](#)

GET PARENTS ON BOARD

To get students signed up to your trip, you'll need to get their parents on board.

You'll have to convince them of two main things – that the trip is worthwhile and their kids will be safe.

But first, you need to let them know the trip is happening. Here's a [sample letter](#) you can send home with students.

And you'll probably want to hold a parents' evening too – here's a [PowerPoint template](#) to help you with this.

What will parents want to know?

Why should I send my child on this trip?

Explain to parents the academic reasons you want to run the trip, but don't forget the other [benefits of school trips](#) – like greater independence and broadening their horizons.

How has the trip been organised?

Parents want to know that their money will be protected and (most importantly) that their children will be safe – and this means they'll want to know about the tour operator you're using.

If you're travelling with us, [download our handout](#), which should help to reassure parents.

Will my child's medical and dietary requirements be catered for?

Of course, the answer is yes.

But make sure you let parents know that they need to tell you about any medical or dietary requirements ASAP, so we can make sure that everyone that needs to be is aware of these.

How are we going to keep in touch?

Will you be posting updates on social media? This can be a great way to reassure nervous parents.

And let them know if kids can bring their phones on the trip (and any rules they'll need to follow). Remind them to look into roaming charges and let them know that lost or damaged phones may not be covered on the insurance.

Finally, make sure they know how to get hold of you in an emergency, and vice versa.

[See more tips »](#)



LAUNCH YOUR TRIP



Create a buzz around your trip

Put posters up around the school promoting your trip and make sure it's mentioned on the school's [social media](#) accounts too.

Have you run the trip before? Then make sure you share pictures and videos from previous trips (so your students can see how much fun they'll have).

And if any of the students who have previously been on the trip are still at school, why not invite them to come and talk to your current group about the great time they had?

Struggled to get the numbers in the past?

Limit the number of places on the trip – the competitive element could encourage more students to sign up.

And consider teaming up with another department to make the trip cross-curricular (opening it up to more students).

Get social

[Social media](#) is a great way to keep parents up-to-date in the lead up to the trip and while you're abroad.

Think about which channels are most appropriate. Most of our Group Leaders tend

to use either Facebook or Twitter, although more are starting to use Instagram too.

Decide whether you're going to use the school's main account or if you're going to set up an account specifically for your trip.

If it's an annual event, a trip-specific account can be a great way of showing how fantastic past trips have been when getting students signed up for the next one.

Tell parents about your social media accounts and how you intend to use them (such as reminding them of deadlines and meetings, sharing packing checklists and updating on your ETA back at school).

Just remember that not all parents will be on social media, so don't make this the only place you share information.

Plan fundraising activities

Get students fundraising for your trip – it'll make it more affordable for parents and gives the kids lots of opportunities for personal development.

Activities such as bake sales, raffles, car washes, car boot sales, bag packing and even crowd funding can be great ways to [raise funds for school trips](#).



START TRIP ADMIN



Confirm passenger numbers

You'll now need to confirm how many people will be travelling in your group.

Put together a payment schedule for parents

Once we've got your final numbers, we can issue your invoice, which will have clear payment deadline details.

Provide parents with a payment schedule that makes sure you meet the deadlines on your invoice (giving them the information as early as possible will help them to budget for the trip).

Confirm your booking

To confirm your booking, you'll need to accept and sign your quote, submit your passenger list, and arrange for your school's finance team to pay the first invoice.



PLAN THE FINER DETAILS OF THE TRIP



Start planning your itinerary

You'll now start working closely with your dedicated Itinerary Coordinator to start planning your itinerary. They'll make sure that your trip includes activities that support your learning objectives and provide plenty of 'wow' moments.

Host another parents' evening

As well as giving parents loads of information about your trip, this is your opportunity to let them know what you need from them.

This includes:

- Passport info (you'll need this to complete the Advance Passenger Information form)
- Medical and dietary requirements (for your risk assessment and so we can make suppliers aware ASAP)

At this point, it's also a good idea to remind parents to check visa requirements.

British citizens can check the website of the [British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(FCDO\)](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Any non-British citizens in your group should check requirements with the relevant embassy as soon as possible, so they have enough time to arrange a visa (if one is required).

Start your **risk assessment**

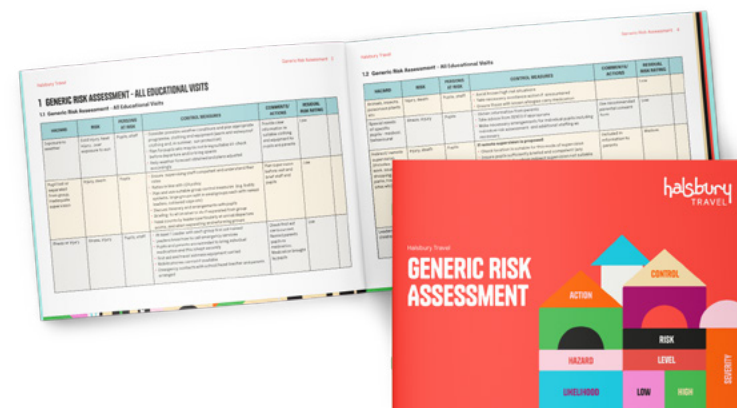
You'll need to follow the guidelines provided by your school and LEA.

We can't do the risk assessment for you, because we don't know your group like you do.

But using a reputable tour operator like Halsbury Travel can significantly reduce your workload – as an Assured Member of the School Travel Forum we've got a Safety Management System that can form part of your risk assessment.

You'll still need to do a risk assessment if you've run the trip before as the group you're taking will have different requirements. But you can use past risk assessments as a framework to speed up the process.

Our '[Generic Risk Assessments for School Educational Visits](#)' and '[Demystifying Risk Assessments](#)' guides are a great starting point for your risk assessment.



MAKE THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS



Finalise your itinerary

It's time to finalise the details of your itinerary with your Itinerary Coordinator. As well as booking activities and visits, you'll also need to make menu selections for meals.

Finish paying for your trip

Once your itinerary's finalised, the final balance payment will be due.

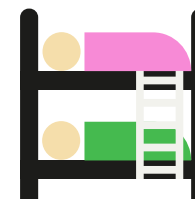


Host your final parents' evening

It's a great idea to host a final parents' evening to make sure parents and guardians have all the information they need.

You'll be able to share the final itinerary, check they understand the luggage restrictions (so you don't have any airport dramas) and make sure they know what their kids need to bring on the trip.

You can also remind them of some key things, like how to contact you in an emergency, whether you'll be posting updates on social media and whether kids can bring their phones.



Complete any remaining risk assessment requirements

This is your final opportunity to complete your risk assessments. If you need any information from us, please get in touch with your Itinerary Coordinator, who'll be pleased to help.

Complete the rooming list

Pro tip - sort out your rooming list before you travel. It'll save you so much time and hassle, and means everyone can just head to their rooms when you get to your hotel.

GET READY FOR YOUR TRIP



Get your final info pack

Everything you need for your trip will be in your final info pack.

This includes 24-hour emergency contact numbers, so you know you can speak to us any time you need to.

And make sure you download the Vamoos app – this will give you access to all your trip documents from your phone or tablet

Pack your bags

Download our [packing checklists](#) so you don't forget anything essential - there's one for students and one for teachers.

Don't forget to remind students about the luggage allowance.

The journey begins...

Travelling by coach?

Make sure you pack plenty of drinks and snacks – but do check with the driver whether you can snack on the coach or need to wait for comfort breaks.

Water's the best drink for a long coach journey. And it's a good idea to bring along some extra in case of a heatwave or breakdown.

Avoid chocolate, crisps and sweets, which can

be messy and will generally make students hyperactive or thirsty. Fruit and nuts (as long as no one is allergic) are much better options.

Wear something comfy – and layers are a great idea, especially if travelling overnight, when temperatures can drop quickly.

Plan some activities to help the journey go a little quicker. That could be watching a film, a coach quiz or even a singalong (if you're feeling brave).

For long coach journeys, eye masks, ear plugs and neck pillows are great for helping you get some much-needed rest.

And don't forget the housekeeping! As any teacher who has ever taken a coach trip with students knows – always pack air freshener, bin bags, wet wipes and kitchen roll...

[See more tips for coach trips »](#)

Flying?

Remind students that customs and security at airports are taken very seriously – officers are unlikely to have the same sense of humour as a group of teenagers.

Have a copy of everyone's boarding pass and passport. And leave a copy of everyone's

passport with the school office (just in case).

It can take longer than you might think to herd a large group through an airport, especially at the check-in desks and security. So, make sure you get there in plenty of time.

Remind your group of the rules around hand luggage. And tell students to say they packed their own bag (even if mum did it) – we've had kids held up at security before for giving the 'wrong' answers.

Divide your group into smaller groups with a staff leader – it's easier to navigate the airport this way.

Staff should then designate a group base in departures for students to check in to regularly if you plan on giving them some free time before boarding. Don't let students wander around alone – it's best if they stay in groups of 3-4.

A WhatsApp group for staff to keep in touch at the airport is a great idea – and most airports offer free WiFi.

Avoid chaos at baggage reclaim – either send one 'mini-group' up at a time or pick a team of baggage pickers. This is much easier if you've tagged all your bags with something quickly recognisable, like a ribbon, strap or sticker.

[See more airport tips »](#)

ANY OTHER TIPS?

Money saving tips for cheaper trips

Choose transport carefully – travelling by coach is usually cheaper than flying and it's better for the environment.

Pre-book meals at your accommodation rather than eating out. You can book packed lunches too, so you don't risk ending up in a café or restaurant with over-inflated tourist prices.

Be flexible about when you travel. Most things in the travel world run on a high and low season basis. So, travelling any time between September and March (and during term time, if you can) will be much cheaper than at any other time of year.

Think about the day of the week that you travel. The most popular day of the week for travel is Friday so, as an example, there's a supplement of £1 a person for Friday ferry crossings.

See more money saving tips »

Continue the learning back in the classroom

The end of your trip isn't the end of the learning journey.

Keep the momentum by getting your students to do some post-trip activities, like:

Write a trip diary – Get them to think about why they went there and what they learned. You could even submit this to the local newspaper – which would be great PR for the school.

Create a short film or collage – This is a great idea if your students took lots of photos and videos of the trip.

Do an assembly – Give your students some great public speaking practice by challenging them to speak about the trip in an assembly. They could work together as a group and put together a slide show of some of their photos.

Build on their language skills – If it was a languages trip, ask them to write a trip diary in the target language or prepare a short presentation



We hope this guide was helpful
and you have a great trip.



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E enquires@halsbury.com

T 01159 404 303

35 Churchill Park, Colwick Business Estate, Nottingham NG4 2HF



[halsbury.com](https://www.halsbury.com)

