

Halsbury Travel

# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO ORGANISING A SCHOOL SKI TRIP



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Welcome to Halsbury's  
Complete Guide to Organising  
a School Ski Trip.

We're guessing you're here because you're thinking of planning a school ski trip. Perhaps it's your first? Or maybe you're just looking for some tips to make the next one even more epic?

Then you're in the right place.

This guide will take you through all the key steps in planning your school ski trip. So, you can share your passion for snowsports and provide your students with an unforgettable experience (without it taking up all your spare time).

Let's dive in.



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# THINK ABOUT YOUR TRIP



## Pro Tip: Plan as early as possible.

Honestly, whenever we're asked for our number one tip for planning school ski trips, we always give the same answer – **start as early as possible**.

Here's why:

- It'll be easier to get your preferred dates, transport, accommodation etc.
- You'll actually make your trip more affordable for your students (because you'll give them longer to pay for it).
- It'll make your life so much easier ('cos you'll have plenty of time to plan everything properly and collect all the information you need from students and parents).
- You'll get a head start on the competition from other trips (if any of your colleagues are likely to run a trip targeting the same pool of students, you'll get in there first).

## What do you need to get quotes for your trip?

Before you can start getting (accurate) quotes for your trip, you'll need a good idea of where and when you want to go (and for how long), as well as your budget.

If you can also have an idea of the type of

accommodation you want to stay in, number of ski lessons per day and how many après-ski activities you might want to pre-book, that's really helpful.

Not sure about some (or all) of this?

Don't worry, that's what we're here for. This is our day job (and we've been doing it for nearly 40 years).

So, just get in touch if you need any advice (even if you're not ready for a quote yet).

You'll also need to know the staff:student ratio required by your LEA or school. As standard, we usually base our quotes on the following free place ratios (but just let us know if yours needs to be different):

1:8 for coach trips

1:10 for trips by air

## How to choose the right resort

The next big decision to make is where you want to ski.

Choosing the right resort for your school ski trip can make or break the experience for your group. But don't worry, we're here to help you make the right choice.

The first thing to say is that if you're booking with us, we'll only offer you resorts that we know work for school ski trips. That includes a good safety



record and good ski schools with English-speaking instructors.

But there are 5 other key considerations when choosing the most suitable ski resort for your group.

### Size versus value for money

If you're an experienced skier yourself, it's only natural to be drawn to the high-mileage resorts.

But remember, the larger the resort, the more expensive the lift pass (generally speaking).

That's fine if you're an experienced skier who's going to get to ski most of the pistes on offer. But the vast majority of school groups are made up of beginners and intermediates (who'll usually max out at 25km in a 2-hour lesson).

If this sounds like your group, you may well be better off in a smaller resort where the cost of the lift pass represents better value for money. Plus, smaller resorts are usually less busy (so they may even get to ski more than they would in a larger resort where they'd waste time in lift queues).

### Transfer and journey times

If (like most school groups) you choose to travel to your ski resort by coach, you'll want to consider the transfer time from Calais.

And if you fly, you'll want a resort that's close to the airport (as long transfer times defeat the purpose of flying).

### Snow reliability

This is most important if you're travelling early or late in the season, when you'll want to take a close look at the resort's snow record, altitude and snow-making facilities.

### Accommodation

If you've got very specific requirements of where you stay, then you'll need to consider this when choosing your resort.

Do you want sole occupancy (or are you happy to be in a larger hotel where other guests will be staying)?

Do you need piste-side accommodation (or could you travel by coach to the slopes each day)?

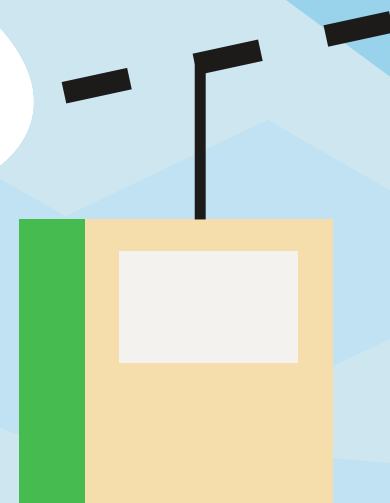
Is it essential that there's a swimming pool (or other on-site après-ski activities or facilities)?

Just let us know what your accommodation needs are and we'll help you work out what's best for your group.

### Evening activities

Evening activities are key to the overall experience. So, you'll need to think about whether you want these to take place at the hotel every night, or if you'd like to mix it up with some more snow-based activities (like snow tubing or snow shoeing).

You could include an evening at a local restaurant (pizzeria nights are a popular option in Italy). Or keep it super chill with a bit of bowling or ice skating.



Again, we can talk you through the options.

## How to decide when to go

Most school ski trips happen during February half term and the Easter holidays. But if you can travel during term time, you'll find lower prices, greater choice and availability, and much quieter slopes.

And the lower prices could mean you're able to open your trip up to students who would never normally be able to afford a school ski trip.

If you need to make a case for term-time ski trips, remember there's loads of educational experiences on a school ski trip, including immersion in another culture and opportunities to practise language skills and see geography in action.

## How to choose your tour operator

There are three questions to ask when choosing your tour operator:

### Are you financially protected?

By choosing a tour operator that is ABTA and ATOL-protected (like us), you can be sure that your trip is financially protected.

### Are they a specialist school ski trip company?

School ski groups have very specialist requirements that are best dealt with by a specialist in school travel (like us).

We're an Assured Member of the School Travel Forum, meaning we comply with a rigorous code of practice, provide groups with 24/7 support and have a [Safety Management System](#) in place.

We also hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge which identifies school travel companies that provide good educational provision and effective risk management ([check out all our accreditations](#)).

### Are you getting informed, honest advice?

You need to know the advice you're getting is informed and honest.

Which is exactly what you'll get from us. We'll tell you whether we think the resort you've chosen is suitable for your group and requirements. And you can trust our advice as we've been doing this for nearly 40 years now. Let us use our knowledge and experience to craft an unforgettable (in all the right ways) ski trip for your school.

## It's time to get a quote...

Now you know what you want, it's time to get a quote.

Your school may require you get several quotes (or you might just want to check you're getting the best deal for your group). In which case, the next step is to compare the quotes – and you need to make sure you're comparing like for like.

Check out our top tips on comparing quotes:





# GET YOUR TRIP APPROVED



## How to get your trip approved

When presenting your school ski trip proposal for approval, you'll need to answer the following:

### What's the value of your trip?

- Ski trips have a rep for being a bit of a jolly...but we all know that they actually offer some incredible benefits for students' physical fitness, physical ability and cognitive skills. They're also great character-building experiences.

» Check out our [poster on the benefits of ski trips](#).

### 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, which usually means performing a [risk assessment](#).
  - » You can lighten your workload by booking with a school tour operator who is an Assured Member of the School Travel Forum and has a Safety Management System (like us).

## Is your tour operator reliable?

- You'll need to show your chosen tour operator is reputable, fully accredited and will prioritise your students' health and safety.
- If you've chosen Halsbury Travel as your tour operator, you may find this [handout](#) useful.

See our [guide to getting your trip approved](#) for more tips.

Once your trip's approved, you can make your provisional booking.

# LAUNCH YOUR TRIP

Now you've made your provisional booking, you can get parents on board and start promoting your trip in school.

## How to get parents on board

The first step is to let them know it's happening. Check out our [guide to writing a school trip letter](#) (you can even download a sample letter – super easy).

And you'll probably want to hold an information evening too. We've put together a [PowerPoint template](#) to help you with this.

There'll be a couple of key things parents will want to know:

### Why should I send my child on this ski trip?

Make sure you point out the many incredible [benefits](#) that school ski trips offer for students and the [impact](#) they can have on them.

### How has the trip been organised?

If you're using a tour operator, parents will want to know more about them (are they financially stable and fully accredited? Will their children be safe travelling with them?). If you're travelling with us, [download our handout](#) which should help to reassure them.

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

Of course, the answer's yes. But parents will need to be prepped to provide this information as early as possible in the process so we can make sure these are properly catered for.

## How are we going to keep in touch?

Let parents know whether you will be posting updates on [social media](#) – this can be a great way to reassure nervous parents.

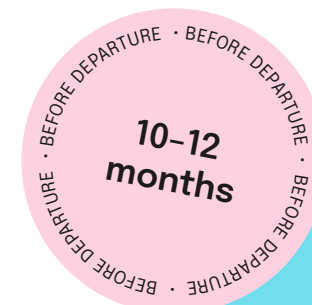
Tell them what your mobile phone policy will be (they'll want to know how to get in touch with their children in an emergency).

### See more tips on getting parents aboard

## How to promote your trip in school

You can put posters up around the school and if you've run the trip before, show your students pics and videos from previous trips. 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 students about the great time they had?

### See more tips on promoting your trip



## Get ready to get social

**Social media** can be a great way to keep parents up-to-date, both in the lead-up to the trip and while you're abroad.

First, think about which channels are most appropriate (we find most of our Group Leaders tend to use either Facebook, X or Instagram).

You'll also need to decide whether you're going to use the school's main account, or if you want to set up an account specifically for your trip. If it's an annual trip, then a trip-specific account can be a great way of showing how great past trips have been when getting students signed up for the next one.

Provide parents with the details of your social media accounts and how you intend to use them, as soon as possible. You can then use social media to remind them of deadlines and meetings, and to share info on what to pack and where to meet for departure.

Pro tip: not all parents will join you on social media, so don't make this the only place you share information.

## Start planning fundraising activities

Encouraging students to get involved in fundraising activities for their trip will make it more affordable and give them some ownership of it. If you're thinking about running any fundraising activities, start planning them now, so you've got plenty of time to reach your target.

Bake sales, raffles, car washes, car boot sales, bag packing and even crowdfunding are all great ways to raise funds for school ski trips.





# START TRIP ADMIN



## Confirm passengers

You'll now need to submit your initial passenger information form. We'll need you to confirm who's travelling and their names according to their passports.

We cannot stress how important it is that the **names on this list match their passports** – airlines charge to correct these at a later date.

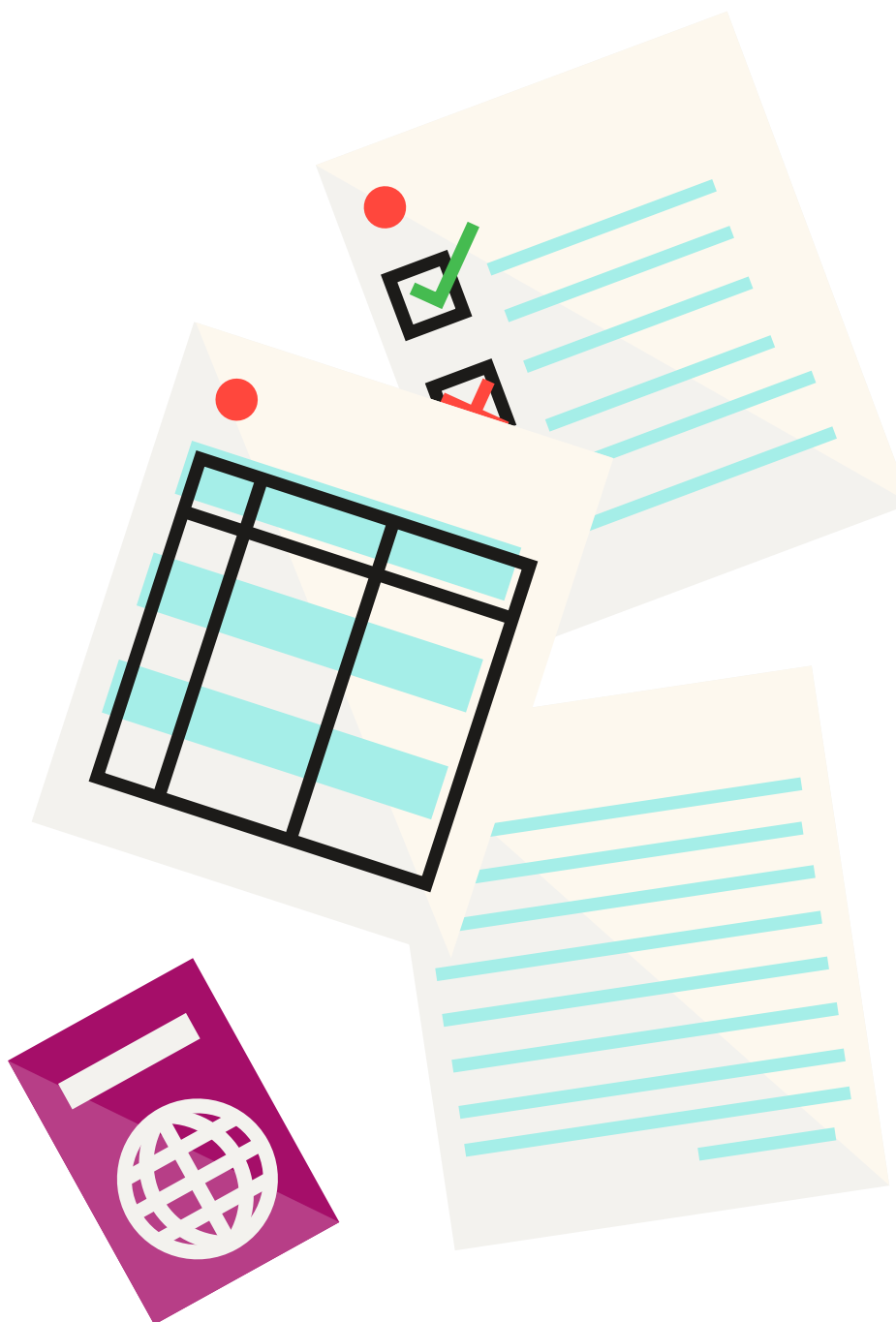
Make sure you remind parents to check that their children have valid passports and any other documents (like visas) that they might need. British citizens can check this on the [FCDO website](#), while other nationalities will need to check with the relevant embassy (and we recommend they do this as soon as they decide they want to go on the trip).

## Give parents the payment schedule

Once we've got your final numbers and passenger list, we can issue your invoice.

This will have really clear payment deadline details, so now's the time to give parents a payment schedule.

This gives parents plenty of notice and means you'll be less likely to have to run around chasing payments to meet the deadlines.



# PLAN THE FINER DETAILS OF THE TRIP



## Start working with your Ski Trip Coordinator

You'll now start working closely with your dedicated Ski Trip Coordinator to plan your itinerary and choose your après-ski activities.

## Request medical and dietary requirements

You'll need these to complete your risk assessment and we also need to make suppliers aware of them well in advance, so that students with medical or dietary requirements are sufficiently catered for.

## Start your risk assessment

### What needs to be included?

You'll need to follow the guidelines provided by your school and LEA. But using a reputable tour operator (like Halsbury) 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.

## Do you need to do a new risk assessment if you've run the trip before?

An important part of the risk assessment is considering the individuals in your group. This'll change with each trip, so you'll need to do a fresh risk assessment (but you'll be able to use past risk assessments as a framework).

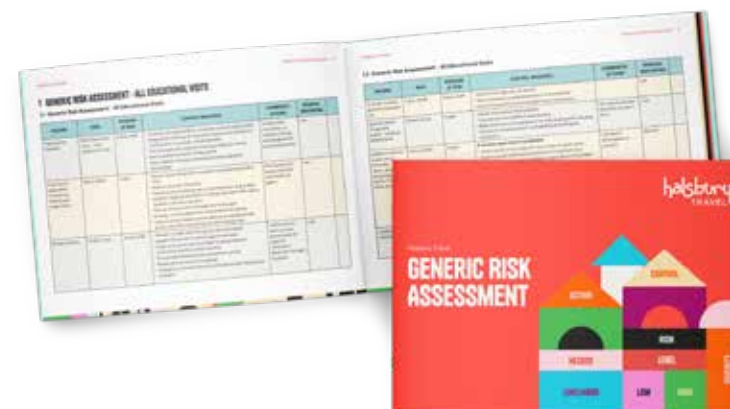
## Can my tour operator do the risk assessment for me?

You're the only one who truly understands the needs of your group, so it's only you who can carry out the risk assessment (but you can use our Safety Management System as part of it, reducing your workload a bit).

For more info, check out our guide to [risk assessments](#).

## Host a parents' evening to provide (and get) further information

Now's a great time to host another parents' evening. You can update parents on the finer details of the trip, remind them of payment schedules and chase up any outstanding passport (or visa) info.



# MAKE THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS



## Finalise your itinerary arrangements

You'll now finalise the details of your itinerary with your Ski Trip Coordinator. As well as après-ski activities, this includes meal choices at restaurants or your accommodation.

## Make the final balance payment

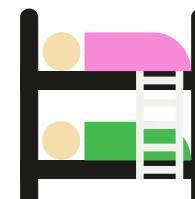
Once your itinerary's finalised, the final balance payment will be due.



## Host your final parents' evening

It's a great idea to host a final parents' evening to make sure parents have all the info they need. This includes sharing the finalised itinerary with them, and making sure they understand luggage restrictions and what their children need to pack (our handy [packing checklist](#) could be really useful here).

You'll also need to remind them how they can contact you in an emergency, whether you'll be posting updates on social media and what the policy is on children taking and using mobile phones.



## Complete any remaining risk assessment requirements

This is your final opportunity to complete your risk assessments. If you need any information from us, just ask your Ski Trip Coordinator who'll be very pleased to help.

## Complete the rooming list

You'll need to complete your rooming list before you travel, so you don't spend ages allocating rooms to students on arrival.



# GET READY FOR YOUR TRIP

## Receive and check through your teacher's pack

This'll have everything you need for your trip, including 24-hour emergency contact numbers, so you can speak to us any time you need to.

## Pack your bags

To make sure you have all the essentials, download our [packing checklist](#). And remember to remind students about the baggage allowance once again.

## Start your journey

### Travelling by coach?

Make sure you pack plenty of refreshments but check what the driver's policy is on eating and drinking on the coach (you may need to save snacking for comfort breaks).

Water's obviously the best drink to take. It may be a good idea to bring along some extra water in case of a heatwave or breakdown.

Snacks to avoid include 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.

Remind everyone to wear something comfortable to sit in. Layers are a great idea, especially if travelling overnight when temperatures can drop quickly.

You may want to plan some activities to help the journey go a little quicker, whether that's a DVD, a coach quiz or even a singalong.

For long coach journeys, eye masks, ear plugs and neck pillows are ideal to help you get some much-needed rest.

And (as any teacher who's ever taken a coach trip with students knows) you should always pack air freshener, bin bags, wet wipes and kitchen roll.

**Check out our top tips for coach trips.**

### Flying?

It's worth reminding students that customs and security at an airport are serious and officers are unlikely to have the same sense of humour as a group of teenagers.

Make sure you have a copy of everyone's boarding pass and passport (it's also worth leaving a copy of everyone's passport with the school office, just in case).

It sounds obvious, but 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 to the airport in plenty of time.

It's important students understand what they can and cannot carry in their hand luggage. And they should



say they packed their own bag (even if mum did it) because we've had some students held up at security for giving the 'wrong' answers.

It's much easier to navigate the airport in smaller groups. Put a member of staff in charge of each mini-group and make sure they know where and when to meet at each point (i.e. after check-in, after security, before boarding, etc.).

Once you're through security, each member of staff can designate a group base for students to check in to regularly if you decide to let them have some free time before boarding (we advise that they stick to groups of 3-4, rather than being allowed to wander around individually).

You should be able to stay in touch with the mini-group leaders and other staff on the trip via Whatsapp. Most airports offer free WiFi, which is particularly useful on the way back.

Allowing the whole group to grab their own luggage from the belt will cause chaos. So, you could either send them up in their mini groups, or you could choose a team of baggage reclaimers (this is easier if you've tagged each of your bags with a recognisable ribbon, strap or sticker).

See more tips in our [guide to getting groups through the airport](#).

# ANY OTHER TIPS?

## Keeping costs down

Here are our top money saving tips:

- Choose your transport carefully. Coach still tends to work out cheaper than flying (and it's more environmentally friendly too). You can also use the coach to take you to the slopes (if required) or to après-ski activities, so it can be the more convenient option too.
- Consider whether it's more cost-effective to be in a hotel that offers doorstep skiing or one that's a short drive to the slopes. Your Ski Specialist will be able to advise you on the options available.
- Could you consider travelling during term time? It'll be much cheaper and the slopes will be quieter too (meaning your students will spend more time skiing and less time queuing for lifts).
- We'd recommend pre-booking your après-ski activities. This is the only way to guarantee availability and means your students won't need to bring loads of spending money with them.

- Choose a resort that offers the best value for your students. Large resorts often have more expensive lift passes and if your students are beginners or intermediates, they won't be able to make full use of them. Your Ski Specialist can help you to choose a resort that suits your group's requirements and budget.
- Pro tip: choose a shorter trip of 8 days with 5 days of skiing (5 hours per day) and not only will you save on hotel, coach and skiing costs, your students will actually get an hour longer on the slopes than the traditional option of 6 days of skiing (4 hours per day).
- And if you travel on a Saturday rather than a Friday, this could work out a little cheaper too.

**See more money-saving tips**

**Enjoy your trip!**



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



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