

The Ski Company

Standard Operating Procedures



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The Ski Company Standard Operating Procedures

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Section 1: Travel to and from Resort

a) Transfers By Air

The Ski Company holds an Air Tour Operator's License issued by the Civil Aviation Authority in the UK (license 10789)

The safety and security of groups travelling by air is the responsibility of the airlines concerned, The Ski Company having no jurisdiction in this area. However, all airlines must adhere to all the relevant international regulations.

All international carriers are required to collect passport information (known as Advanced Passenger Information) for all passengers prior to travel. Any passenger that has not provided this information will not be allowed to board their flight. The passport information provided must be from the passport that the client will be travelling with. If the passport is replaced in the time between booking and travelling, the updated details must be passed to us so that we can inform the airline. Failure to provide this information will result in the client being unable to travel.

Transfers to Airport and/or resort

When provided, these will be by coach, minibus, taxi, car or rail and may be provided by a variety of operators.

e) In General

When transport services are provided, The Ski Company will use a reputable company which meets all the appropriate regulations and the party leader will be informed of these arrangements prior to departure.

Section 2: Accommodation

a) Colonies and Hotels

All Colonies and Hotels have to be licensed and approved for use by the local authorities.

b) Emergency Contact

The school party leader should on arrival, request to swap contact numbers with the Ski Company staff in resort. School staff are also shown the location of staff accommodation, so in the event of problems with telephone communication contact in an emergency is still possible.

c) Dietary Requirements

Information on all dietary requirements, whether for health or religious reasons, is requested when booking. It is the responsibility of the parents / guardians (as agreed on the booking form) to inform The Ski Company of any changes to these requirements. Clients with serious food allergies should make the severity known at the earliest opportunity so that



we can forewarn the kitchen and discuss options prior to arrival in resort.

We cannot promise to accommodate every whim, but we do take dietary requirements very seriously and will do our utmost to make sure all our guests are fuelled up for their mountain adventures.

Section 3: Daytime Activities

a) Skiing and Snowboarding

During the time booked by the school for ski and snowboard lessons, instructors from the local Ski School or those qualified to the required national standard will be in charge of a group. Group sizes for the instruction of skiing average 10 persons per group and group sizes for the instruction of snowboarding average 8 persons per group. Ski and snowboard lessons are normally booked for 5 hours per day, 2.5 hours of lessons in the morning and 2.5 hours of lessons in the afternoon.

There are only two circumstances when adults not qualified to teach skiing / snowboarding may be in charge of one or more children on the ski slopes.

1) If one or more persons have become detached from their instructor for any reason, it is expected that Ski Company staff, or in an emergency School staff, will take charge of this person(s), either by waiting with this person(s) until they are reunited with their instructor or by leading this person(s) to a place of safety such as the edge of the piste, a lift station or mountain restaurant.

2) It must be understood that learning to ski / snowboard is quite demanding, many new skills have to be acquired and practised. During this learning period it is not uncommon for an individual to have difficulty learning a particular skill and as a consequence cannot progress at the same pace as the rest of the group. When such an individual is identified by their ski / snowboard instructor, if circumstances allow, school staff and Ski Company staff, who in the opinion of the resort director are competent to do so, will provide additional help in an attempt to assist this individual with their particular need; the aim being to reintroduce this individual back into their lesson group as quickly as possible. Under most circumstances these needs can be resolved within a few hours. Such help can only be provided on a dedicated nursery slope where an instructor is actively teaching.

However, it must be noted that a ski / snowboard instructor can, if the situation demands, ask any adult for assistance with his / her group; at such a request it is expected if at all possible that the adult concerned complies with this request.

School children will not be allowed to 'free' ski or snowboard for any reason and all pupils who wish to participate in an activity should be with their instructor or another adult as in the previously described situations.

During the lunchtime break of (normally) 1 hour, it is expected that school staff, Ski Company staff and instructors will supervise as appropriate. It must be understood that by the very



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nature of the sport and the terrain that the group is skiing / snowboarding, that it may not be possible for all the groups to meet at the same place for lunch, therefore, it is possible and at times even likely that the sole adult in charge of the group may well be their ski or snowboard instructor.

We do not have exclusive use of the slopes and as such all pupils and teachers should be aware of the FIS rules of conduct. These rules are essentially the Highway Code for skiing and snowboarding and give guidelines for using and sharing the slopes. Not following these rules will increase the chance of an accident and more importantly, the guilty party may well have to accept liability for any such accident caused.

During lesson time the instructor is responsible for safety and learning. Individuals are expected to behave in a manner that does not compromise the safety of the group or disrupt the learning of the activity. Offending individuals can be excluded from lessons at any time, any additional discipline will be at the discretion of the school staff.

Instructors are trained to deal with the physical, technical and emotional aspects of learning a new activity and Ski Company staff will give as much help as is required to assist in these matters but if a child chooses to 'give up' they will not be forced to participate.

Lack of physical fitness is a common factor in these cases and some children are just not prepared for the emotional challenge of a new sport. The resulting poor performance can lead to increased fatigue and further negativity. We now have a 'vicious circle'.

Forcing a child to ski is of no use to anyone and usually results in injury (or faked injury). The danger of this situation occurring when learning to snowboard is even more so due to the greater physical and emotional demands of the sport.

Although resources are not unlimited, we will explore all possible avenues for a given situation but if in the opinion of the resort director, a child is physically or emotionally incapable of safely continuing in the chosen activity, then the child will be withdrawn for his / her own protection.

Pupils who are not participating due to injury, fitness or behaviour may be looked after away from the slopes by Ski Company staff if available but in most cases it will be necessary for school staff to look after these individuals.

The level of attention required will vary with the age of the student and their physical condition.

It will not be possible to organise alternative activities other than those that are offered "in-house" by the centre and these facilities will vary depending on where you are staying.

The 'poor fitness' of a 'non-sporty' child will not be covered by our insurance policy and refunds will not be given by the company.



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The weeks before departure, if used effectively, can reduce the chance of this 'breakdown'. Better general fitness is proven to help.

Some schools use dry-slopes or indoor snow slopes as part of a training program to learn some basic skills prior to the trip. Dry slopes have their own specific dangers and should be used with caution in the weeks running up to departure.

b) Equipment - skis, boards and boots.

Students using equipment supplied by The Ski Company

Most equipment is rented locally from reputable outlets. All equipment is safety checked and serviced when required. All equipment is fitted by staff with the appropriate training and / or experience.

Students using their own equipment

The Ski Company will check the equipment and if there is any reason to believe that it is unsafe or unsuitable then The Ski Company will not allow this equipment to be used.

c) Protective Equipment - helmets, wrist guards etc.

The use of safety equipment including helmets, body armour, spine protectors, 'butt pads', and wrist guards is becoming more common in both skiing and snowboarding.

All students who are travelling as part of a school group with The Ski Company are required to wear a protective helmet whilst skiing or snowboarding.

The Ski Company has included the hire of helmets in the cost of the holiday. The helmet may not be new at the time of issue but will be in good condition and should be returned in a good state at the end of the week.

When a parent wishes a student to use their own helmet or wrist guards, it will be entirely at his / her own risk.

A helmet must meet the EN 1077 standard. The helmet must be made by a recognised manufacturer who has advertised this helmet as a model designed for skiing and approved as an EN 1077 alpine ski helmet.

Please note: helmets for skateboarding may look suitable but will be marked as EN 1078, this is the standard for cycles, skateboards and skates. These helmets are not designed for the specific needs of winter sports and will not be allowed.

When a student brings a helmet or any other safety equipment, it is impossible for the Ski Company to know the history so we are unable to "approve" its use, however a visual inspection will be made and if the equipment is obviously damaged or has been altered or abused The Ski Company will disallow the use of the equipment.

d) School Staff



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Equipment will be issued to staff as requested on the appropriate booking form. Staff are very welcome to borrow a second set of equipment on a day to day basis if it is available in our normal rental stock. It is not possible to guarantee the use of multiple sets of skis, boards or snowblades for the whole week.

School staff, being over 18, are free to make their own decisions, however, it should be noted that the law in Italy has changed and helmets are now compulsory for all participants on the slopes, regardless of age or experience level.

e) Transfer to and from ski slopes

Transfer to and from the ski slopes is by coach or by the local ski bus provided by the local authorities. The Ski Company has no jurisdiction over these local services, however the drivers provided for these local services are perhaps the most experienced available and as such can be relied upon to provide a safe service.

Section 4: Evening Activities

a) Water based activities

All centres used will follow their national rules and regulations in the provision of life-saving and emergency first aid facilities as required by their laws - however whilst children are in the water it is expected that at least some of the school staff in attendance of the group will also be in the water acting as an 'extra pair of eyes'.

b) Torchlight Skiing and Floodlight Skiing

During all these sessions groups will be under the supervision of qualified ski / snowboard instructors. The torches used for torchlight skiing are wax based and have a naked flame - as such there is a small risk of a minor burn being inflicted - however in the 30+ years of being involved with The Ski Company there has not been a single such burn - it is the opinion of The Ski Company that the risk of burning is so low as to be insignificant. However, whilst the torches are burning, wax does drip off and invariably comes to rest on clothing, so some minor damage to clothing is possible.

c) Sports Hall Activities

Such activities as football, netball and basketball are freely available in some centres - when these activities are organised for a group Ski Company staff will be present. All equipment used, such as football nets, will be used in accordance with manufacturers specifications. During non-activity time, should a group of students wish to use the sports hall for, say a game of football, it is the policy of The Ski Company to allow such use unsupervised; if the accompanying school staff are in agreement.

d) Discos

Most discos take place on site and under the control of The Ski Company. During these events students do not have access to any electrical equipment or lighting, the use of stroboscopes is not banned but is strictly limited.



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e) Saunas / Turkish Baths / Whirlpools

Some centres provide these facilities, when used by the group school staff and Ski Company staff will be present. The safe operation of these facilities will be the responsibility of the centre owners and again subject to approval of the local authorities.

f) Bum Boarding / Tobogganing

Bum boarding will take place under the control of Ski Company staff at a suitable site. For a site to be deemed suitable there must be sufficient snow cover, the slope to be used must not be too steep and there must be sufficient room for run off. Participating students will be allowed to descend the slope in strict rotation so as to avoid overcrowding of the area.

g) Bowling

Local facilities will be used, school staff and Ski Company staff accompanying the group. Apart from instructing the students to keep their fingers out of the way of the returning balls, we feel there is very little danger to students.

h) Use of Pool and Table Tennis Tables

These facilities are generally available in all resorts, the risk to participants is deemed to be very low and as such no supervision will be provided by The Ski Company staff, nor is any expected by school staff.

i) Treasure Hunt

Treasure hunts are only arranged in the smaller resorts where traffic volume is low. The 'hunt area' is small and within the confines of the village. The students are instructed to work together in small groups (minimum of 3), school staff and Ski Company staff will be patrolling the area of the hunt, the duration of which is in the region of 45 minutes. Students will be checked out at the beginning of the hunt and checked in at the end of the hunt.

j) Ice Skating / Curling / Eisstock

These activities are held on outdoor or indoor rinks prepared for use by the local authorities, supervision of these activities will be provided by The Ski Company staff.

k) Snow shoeing

Snowshoes are bigger than normal shoes and are racket like in appearance with straps for attachment to normal footwear. Snow shoes have a system for gripping the ground which is similar to the teeth found on crampons. Improper use could result in injury but if used as intended the equipment is not dangerous and very little training is required.

As snow shoes are simply an aid for walking on snow the activity does not present any significant increase in risk over and above that of normal walking, however, snow shoes may mean that groups can get to places that will have an increased risk. For this reason the activity will only take place under supervision from Ski Company and school staff. As with all alpine activities, factors such as terrain and weather conditions will be taken into account when deciding when and where to walk, what to wear and what if any additional clothing or equipment will be needed.



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Section 5: Alcohol & Smoking

The legal drinking age can vary across Europe and rules may be different to your country, however, The Ski Company still enforce a general ban on all alcoholic drinks for those under 18 years of age.

Some schools do allow their older students to have a drink in strict moderation under the supervision of the school staff and if requested The Ski Company will allow such purchases, beer and wine only.

No student of any age will be allowed to bring any form of alcohol, even alcohol bought as gifts for parents etc, into the centre. However, it must be understood that it is not possible to operate a 'stop and search' policy, so there is always the possibility of alcohol being 'smuggled' into the building. If found, this alcohol will be confiscated and the find reported to school staff.

There is a strict ban on smoking in all centres. This includes all bedrooms, all restaurant areas, lounge areas, games rooms, storage areas, television rooms and any other enclosed spaces.

Section 6: Accidents

It must be understood that by the very nature of skiing and snowboarding, accidents and consequent injury to participants is to be expected. Modern ski and snowboard equipment have helped enormously to reduce such injuries, but as a rule of thumb it is anticipated some 2% of participants will require some form of medical attention during their stay. Injuries to participants can be placed into three categories.

Category 1: The vast majority of injuries sustained fall into this category, they are minor, requiring little or no medical treatment, such injuries will be treated locally.

Category 2: Injuries to these participants are more serious and require professional medical attention. These persons will be seen by the local mountain rescue services at the scene of the accident, their injury will be assessed and arrangements made for their transfer to a doctor or hospital. The type of transfer arranged can involve a rescue sledge, rat-track, helicopter, ambulance, car or taxi.

Category 3: A minority of cases fall into this category, usually one or two per season. Treatment of the injury may require surgery and a stay in hospital. Treatment will be authorised on the advice of the attending doctor; the insurance company, school staff and parents will be informed in that order of the situation as soon as time permits. Arrangements for school staff and a parent to visit will be made as soon as possible. In these circumstances it must be understood that the treatment of the patient comes first, all other arrangements are secondary and will be organised as soon as is possible.



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Medical services in the countries we visit are generally excellent. The surgeries at the local doctors are effectively mini hospitals, treatment is 'on the spot' and of the highest standard. In the thirty years the author of this document has been working with school groups, virtually every patient who has been taken to a local doctor has been treated by this doctor, only on a very few occasions has it been necessary to transfer a patient to the local hospital.

Once a child is on their way to a medical centre the Ski Company representative in resort will be informed of the situation and this will be discussed with a senior member of staff. Treatment will be authorised on the advice of the attending doctor and the patient brought back to their accommodation as soon as permission is granted by the treating doctor.

It should be noted that laws in some countries state that once a child reaches 16, they are considered an adult and are able to consent to their own medical treatment, regardless of whether or not a parent or other legal guardian is present.

Occasionally, very occasionally, the procedures outlined above cannot go according to plan and we have to change them to suit conditions and so keep the patient safe.

Section 7: Insurance

Schools can choose to use their own winter sports insurance policy or use a policy purchased on their behalf by The Ski Company.

If the school has decided to take the policy suggested by The Ski Company a full policy document is enclosed. Should the school subsequently decide that this policy is not suitable The Ski Company should be informed by the end of September.

The latest version of the policy can be found at <http://www.skicompany.net>

All students and staff must bring with them to resort a valid EHIC or GHIC card, if they are eligible.

Section 8: Travel Documents

Every person travelling with The Ski Company must have travel documents valid for their entire stay.

The rules for travel and for entry into the 'Schengen' area will not be the same for all nationalities and they can also change from one year to the next. If you are unsure of what documents are required please check with the embassy website for the countries through which you are travelling.

The Ski Company has carefully been through the guidelines and we are happy to advise but we cannot take responsibility for incorrect, invalid or out of date travel documents.



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Furthermore, we suggest school party leaders should double check the travel documents well before departure and before flight tickets are issued, as mistakes noticed en-route could incur considerable inconvenience and expense.

Schengen Visa

The name “Schengen” originates from a small town in Luxembourg where in March 1995, seven European Union countries signed a treaty to simplify travel around Europe and many more countries have since then joined the scheme.

The Schengen Association Agreement allows member countries to share a common border and in theory means a “passport free zone” once you are within the Schengen area. The co-operation between the police forces within the area is known as the Schengen Information System

In real terms this means our customers may have to satisfy new rules for entry if travelling from outside the Schengen area (i.e. flying from the UK or from many non-EU countries).

MEMBERS LIST: The following countries are at time of writing, members of the Schengen Visa Treaty scheme and DO NOT need a Visa; 29 countries: 25 EU Member States and 4 non-EU countries, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland

EXEMPT LIST: At the time of writing, citizens of the following countries (Annex ii - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2018/1806/annex/II>) are exempt and do not need to apply for a Visa for a short visit or transit in Schengen countries: former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Andorra, United Arab Emirates, Antigua and Barbuda, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Barbados, Brunei, Brazil, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Micronesia, Grenada, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Kiribati, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Korea, Saint Lucia, Monaco, Moldova, Montenegro, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nauru, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Palau, Paraguay, Serbia (with exclusions), Solomon Islands, Seychelles, Singapore, San Marino, El Salvador, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom. In addition, Chinese citizens holding a Hong Kong and Macao passport are exempted from visa application.

If your passport is issued by a country in the MEMBERS list or the EXEMPT list you do NOT need a Schengen Visa for travel to any country on the MEMBERS list.

If you have a permit of residency or similar from a country in the MEMBERS list you do NOT need a Schengen Visa for travel to any country on the MEMBERS list..

If you have a permit of residency or similar from a country in the EXEMPT list (this includes the UK), you DO need a Schengen Visa for travel to any country on the MEMBERS list however, a student may be EXEMPT from visa requirements if travelling with other students and a teacher as part of a school trip – this is called Article 6(2)a and more information can be found here - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2018/1806>

If you do not fit into any of the above scenarios then you are almost certain to need a Schengen Visa or to any country on the MEMBERS list.



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IMPORTANT - these list change so please do your own checks before travel.

Section 9: General Behaviour

On vehicles

Whilst vehicles are in motion, all individuals are expected to stay in their seats and seat belts should be worn.

It is the responsibility of school staff to ensure reasonable behaviour from the group at all times. This includes noise levels and litter. The vehicle should be checked before boarding and in the unlikely event that there are any issues, these should be reported immediately as any charge for damage caused by passengers or additional cleaning costs will be the responsibility of the group. Taking photographs can be a good way to record any problems.

The driver should not be distracted and any requests should be directed to the co-driver or a Ski Company representative.

Passengers will be responsible for any damage to the vehicle or unreasonable mess and litter. Drivers will provide rubbish bags. If a coach arrives in resort in an unreasonable state then the group who travelled on board will be expected to clean the interior of the vehicle.

Adults and staff will ideally be placed around the vehicle to help to quickly deal with any problems and will also discourage pupils from being out of their seats unnecessarily.

In the chalets and hotels

The following applies to all areas in and around restaurants, the lounge areas, sports halls, accommodation, toilets, common areas and any other facilities or buildings used by The Ski Company.

It is the responsibility of school staff to ensure reasonable behaviour from the group at all times. This includes noise levels and litter.

Foul language and disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Rooms should be kept in good order.

Damage to company property is becoming a problem. Accidents do happen and wear and tear is expected but damage of a malicious nature cannot be ignored.

The person who signed the booking form is responsible for any extra costs incurred by an individual and may be invoiced for repairs to accidental or intentional damage to company property or equipment. When several students are involved the costs may be shared.



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Section 10: General

I have attempted in this document to outline how we at The Ski Company 'take care' of our groups travelling abroad. We are very much aware that parents are 'lending' us their child for the duration of their stay and want their child back 'in one piece'. It must be understood that by the very nature of the sport accidents do happen, thankfully serious accidents are very few and far between. To date we have not had a serious injury to a child but we are very much aware that such an injury is a possibility. In an attempt to minimise risk we at the Ski Company take a very much 'hands-on' approach to the daily routine in resort, with experienced staff on the slopes and in resort at all times. The experience gained over many years of working with school groups helps us to foresee and identify situations that could jeopardise the health and safety of the group and so take the necessary action to minimise this danger. Whilst 99% of dangers that occur are familiar to ourselves, there is always the remaining 1% of situations that we have not as yet experienced. If we are unsure about conditions that could potentially prove to be an unacceptable risk to participants we simply stop what we are doing, move to a safe place and wait for the danger to pass - this may mean disruption to any aspect of the holiday, if that is the case, then quite simply, so be it. This does not mean that skiing or snowboarding will be abandoned for the day in the event of poor weather, there is no harm in children experiencing poor weather, after all, despite what the brochures show, not every day in the mountains is warm and sunny with clear blue skies!

We do seem to now be living in an age of strict directives and guidelines, for the majority of schools these guidelines are fine but I am very much aware that there are special needs and requirements for some school groups. If you feel that special arrangements are required for your group please do not hesitate to discuss these so allowances can be made.

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The **FIS Code of Conduct** has been put together to help everyone stay safe.

You may find that it is a term of your insurance cover to ski within the boundaries of the FIS Code of Conduct, so make sure you read your insurance policy carefully.

1 Respect for others – A skier or snowboarder must behave in such a way that he or she does not endanger or prejudice others.

2 Control of speed and skiing or snowboarding – Every skier or snowboarder must move in control. He must adapt the speed and manner of skiing or snowboarding to his personal ability and to the prevailing conditions of terrain, snow and weather as well as to the density of traffic.

3 Choice of route – A skier or snowboarder coming from behind must choose his route in such a way not to endanger skiers or snowboarders ahead

4 Overtaking – A skier or snowboarder may overtake another skier or snowboarder above or below and to the right or to the left provided that he leaves enough space for the overtaken skier or snowboarder to make any voluntary or involuntary movement.

5 Entering, starting and moving upwards – A skier or snowboarder entering a marked run, starting again after stopping or moving upwards on the slopes must look up and down the slopes that he can do so without endangering himself or others.

6 Stopping – Unless absolutely necessary, a skier or snowboarder must avoid stopping on the piste in narrow places or where visibility is restricted. After a fall in such a place, a skier or snowboarder must move and clear the slope as soon as possible.

7 Climbing and descending on foot – A skier or snowboarder either climbing or descending on foot must keep to the side of the slope.

8 Respect for signs and markings – Skiers and snowboarders must respect all signs and markings.

9 Assistance – At accidents, every skier or snowboarder is duty bound to assist.

10 Identification – Every skier or snowboarder and witness, whether a responsible party or not, must exchange names and addresses following an accident.



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