



**New York Convention**  
**Party Leader Briefing Document**

Welcome to New York

This document has been designed to assist you with a Parents Evening and staff/student briefings.

**Airport & Documentation**

- ❑ Final itinerary, luggage labels, tickets and local contact details will be sent to you approximately 7 days prior to departure, however, delays can occur if rooming/names lists are late, if payment is delayed or there are late changes to your group or itinerary.
- ❑ Airport check-in times, flight times and terminal information are detailed on your itinerary. NB. The New York airports may differ on the outbound and inbound journeys – please check, especially if you are arranging your UK transfers independently.
- ❑ Airline terminals:
  - a) Heathrow: British Airways Terminal 5 / Virgin Terminal 3.
  - b) Manchester: British Airways Terminal 3 / Continental Terminal 2
  - c) NYC JFK: British Airways Arrive/Depart Terminal 7 / Virgin Arrive JFK Terminal 4.
  - d) NYC Newark: British Airways & Virgin Terminal B / Continental Terminal B and C.

NB For groups flying from other local airports, details are provided on your Final Tour Itinerary.

- ❑ Passengers can no longer take 2 pieces of free hold luggage on trans-Atlantic flights. It is now restricted to one piece weighing no more than 23kgs. Please visit airline websites for up to date charges for taking either a 2<sup>nd</sup> bag or sports equipment
- ❑ All passengers are asked to comply with hand baggage restrictions to prevent delays at airport security points. To help scanners detect liquids you must present all liquids carried to the scanners at security checkpoints for examination. Liquid contents with no greater capacity of 100ml must be brought to the airport in a single transparent re-sealable plastic bag, which itself must not exceed 1 litre in capacity (approximately 20cm x 20cm). These restrictions apply to hand luggage only.
- ❑ Please note we request with the airlines that your group be seated together, however we cannot guarantee this. Any issues please discuss with the staff member at check-in or alternatively ask the flight attendant to move any individuals once you have boarded.

- ❑ Some airlines offer a group check-in. If you require this service please let your Account Manager know as soon as possible. We will need full passenger names and passport details to complete this process.
- ❑ If you or your students are an eligible national of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and as such do not require a visa to enter the USA you will NOW need to obtain electronic travel authorization prior to departure. Please see information on the VWP below or visit <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>
- ❑ Passports are recommended to have a minimum of 3 months (90 days) validity. However as long as the passport is valid for the day of return this will be honoured by U.S. authorities.

### **Passports & Tickets**

- ❑ Please pay careful attention to the change in Passport and Visa Waiver requirements as detailed in the Party Leader Information File.
- ❑ Remember to keep all passports and tickets in hand luggage
- ❑ Airlines now issue E-tickets – 1 per person. These will be provided in your final travel pack
- ❑ **We recommend that a photocopy of the relevant page of all Passports is taken and carried by the group leader to assist in case of loss or damage.**
- ❑ Tickets should match the name as per Passport (not necessarily as per the school/college register). Any changes to the ticket will incur a name change or re-ticketing charge of £50 minimum per person.
- ❑ Any lost tickets will need to be re-issued and there is a charge for this made by the airline. In most cases this will equate to the price of a new ticket which would be refunded by the airline once proof of the original ticket is provided. The airline will also make an administrative charge for the re-issue.

### **On Arrival**

- ❑ On arrival, mobile phones must not be used until you have cleared immigration and customs.
- ❑ US customs are very strict on food products and will not allow fruit, vegetables and meat to be taken into the US.
- ❑ Once you have cleared immigration, proceed to the baggage carousels and then onto Customs Hall. Assemble together in the Arrivals Hall and refer to your Final Tour Itinerary itinerary regarding your coach transfer to the hotel.
- ❑ Depending on the size of your group you may be twinned with another School or College. If this is the case, you will need to meet up in the arrivals hall prior to calling up your bus. (This will be detailed on your itinerary)

## Accommodation & Check-in

- a) Check-in is not normally possible before 3 pm in the afternoon. Groups arriving before this time will have to deposit their bags at the hotel and return later.
- b) Where applicable, in room movies and outbound calls on the telephones will be barred in all student rooms.
- c) Rooming lists provided by the group are sent to the hotels 4 weeks prior to departure and to comply with fire regulations this rooming configuration must be adhered to. (It cannot be changed on arrival).
- d) **Although hotels are aware of the need for close supervision, they are not able to guarantee students from the same school/college will be accommodated on the same floor or indeed that staff rooms will be adjacent to them.** The Pennsylvania has permanent security on its elevators and CCTV cameras on every landing.
- e) At the Pennsylvania only, you can request the Bell Captain to agree a curfew time for your students so that their safety and security can be better protected.
- f) If you have any issues with your rooms please contact Reception and the staff will do their best to rectify these for you immediately.

## Seminar details

- Almost without exception, Seminars are held on the morning of Day 2 from approximately 0900 until 1300. The majority of our Conventions operate a Rolling Seminar which are subject-specific and each tour is slightly different: Full details will be sent a minimum of 1 month prior to departure and usually much earlier:
  - a) **Rolling Seminars** will involve a guided city tour specifically related to the Convention subject. The coach will pick up from your hotel around 9am and most of the rolling seminars will normally finish at Battery Park (exact details of where you will finish your tour will be given with your seminar details). NB. You may be twinned with another school/college(s) and this may involve pick ups en-route – details will be given in your final tour itinerary.
  - b) “Static” seminars involving guest speakers and are usually held at Madame Tussauds on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street however the venue may vary. Please refer to your final itinerary.
  - c) **Art & Photography Seminars** involve local visits and not a city tour.
  - d) Free additional visits are included in some of the seminars, details as per the flyer. If you are not intending to make these additional visits, please let us know as early as possible.

## New York City

- The Metro/Subway/bus system is a quick, efficient, safe and good value way to travel around New York. For ease, we strongly recommend that tickets are pre-purchased in the UK. Although there are vending machines at all subway stations, they often will only issue one ticket at a time.
- We recommend that each student carry’s an envelope with the name, address & telephone number of the hotel and a \$20 ‘emergency fund’ to ensure that they can take a

taxi and get back quickly and safely to their hotel should they get separated from the group.

- ❑ Tipping is a way of life in New York and our recommendation is as follows:
  - a) For airport/hotel transfers – this is included and there is no need to tip.
  - b) For tours; City Guide \$1 per student (min \$10) (Driver tip already included).
  - c) Customary to leave \$5-\$10 per room for the cleaning staff.
  - d) In Restaurants, if service not included, double the tax and pay this as a tip. (15-20%)
  - e) Taxis approximately 15% of the fare.
  
- ❑ No alcohol will be served to anyone under 21. Smoking is prohibited in restaurants, bars, hotels and transport. (Please adhere to all local regulations).

### **Day of Departure**

- ❑ Baggage allowance – please refer to the airline restrictions mentioned above.
  
- ❑ Check out: In most cases, rooms must be vacated by 1100 and arrangements will be made to store your groups' bags until departure. It will not normally be possible to get access to the bags at this time.

**We wish you a most enjoyable visit to New York**



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Electronic Travel Authorization

If you or your students are eligible nationals of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and as such do not require a visa to enter the USA, you will NOW need to obtain an electronic travel authorization prior to departure.

From 12 January 2009, all qualified VWP travelers will be required to obtain electronic travel authorization prior to boarding an air or sea carrier to the United States. Travelers who do not receive travel authorization prior to their departure may be denied boarding, experience delays or be denied admission into the United States. Applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, but no less than 72 hours prior to departure.

Travel Authorization is obtained through an online registration system known as the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. While not compulsory, travelers may obtain travel authorization from August 1, 2008 onwards. If you are planning on traveling to the United States anytime after August 1, you may wish to consider registering with ESTA before your departure. If your registration is successful, it will be valid for multiple applications for two years or until the date on which your passport expires, whichever comes first.

Before going on line to register, you should ensure that you are qualified to travel under the Visa Waiver Program; otherwise your registration will be rejected. ESTA only authorizes a traveler to board an air or sea carrier for travel to the United States. It also does not guarantee entry into the United States; that decision rests with the immigration official at the Port of Entry in the same way that travelers currently entering the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program or with a visa are subject to inspection.

ESTA is not a visa / ESTA does not guarantee entry into the USA ESTA application is free (at the time of writing).

Further information can be found on [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id\\_visa/esta/esta\\_faq.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/esta_faq.xml) (The section on FAQ's is particularly useful.)



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