

International School Study Tours Handbook

To be used in conjunction with [International School Study Tours Procedure](#) and [OneSchool Help - Excursion Planner - International School Study Tours \(ISST\)](#) (DoE employees only)

Acronyms

CARA	Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment
DoE	Department of Education
FBT	Fringe benefits tax
FOC	Free of charge
ISST	International School Study Tour
ITR	International Travel Report
ITU	International Travel Unit
RD	Regional Director
TRS	Teacher Relief Scheme

Planning

To apply for an International School Study Tour (ISST), schools need to complete an Excursion Planner in OneSchool. The file path to access the Excursion Planner (once in OneSchool) is Curriculum & Assessment > Excursion Planner.

For help to complete the Excursion Planner please refer to OneSchool Help > Curriculum and Assessment > Excursion Planner > Excursion Planner - International School Study Tours (ISST).

Managing risks

The Excursion Planner must include a Risk Assessment by attaching completed Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment (CARA) records for all activities including travel and [accommodation](#).

Any activities occurring as part of the ISST must be covered under the [GoSafe Product Disclosure Statement](#).

Where a participant cannot be vaccinated, this must be considered as part of the Risk Assessment.

The use of cultural or communal bathing facilities (e.g. Japanese onsen) where students may be exposed to nudity is strictly prohibited.

ISST templates

The following templates are to be used by schools to prepare for an ISST. Using these documents will provide documentary evidence of transparency and compliance with DoE requirements for audit purposes:

- [ISST student participant agreement](#)
- [ISST supervising volunteer agreement](#)
- [ISST supervising teacher agreement](#)
- [Request for student to remain overseas at conclusion of tour](#)
- [ISST costings template \(DoE employees only\)](#)
- [ISST travel itinerary \(DoE employees only\)](#)

Non-departmental study tours

Students and teachers may choose to participate in privately organised/operated short study tours and exchange programs offered by an organisation other than DoE. For example, Educational World Travel offers the G'Day USA Cultural Exchange Program, a short-term cultural exchange which offers high school students and staff the opportunity to travel to the USA.

DoE holds no responsibility for individuals wishing to participate in these types of programs and consequently an Excursion Planner is not required.

Smartraveller

[Smartraveller](#) travel advisories are graded across four different levels:

- Level 1 - Exercise normal safety precautions
- Level 2 - Exercise a high degree of caution
- Level 3 - Reconsider your need to travel
- Level 4 - Do not travel.

Travel advisory levels must be checked at country and city/region/province level, considering actual city/region/province to be visited, and:

1. If destinations are graded as Level 2 or 3, the specific risks (e.g. terrorism, natural disaster) must be addressed and risk mitigation strategies detailed as part of the Excursion Planner
2. If a destination is designated Level 3, the excursion planner needs to include justification as to why travel is essential and cannot reasonably be delayed or cancelled to be approved by the Regional Director/Executive Director Regional Operations
3. If a destination is graded Level 4, the department will not permit travel.

The responsible officer must register for and check the Smartraveller travel advisories and monitor any health warnings issued by the [WHO](#) or the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) for any information that may affect the ISST at the planning stage, for period leading up to and for duration of the ISST. Smartraveller access dates should also be noted.

Parental consent forms for any ISST must include the Smartraveller advisory level/s for ISST destination/s to ensure parent/carer awareness and active consent.

It is advisable that each traveller subscribes to the Smartraveller website to receive the latest travel advice.

Consult with the relevant divisional contact if travel relates to [Foreign Arrangements](#) i.e. Sister School Arrangements.

Other requirements

Minimise the number of school days in travel.

Students participating in an ISST must be 10 years old, or in Year 5 (whichever comes first) at the time of the travel.

Student participation in homestay is only permitted for secondary school students, Year 7 and above, at the time of travel and as specified in the relevant [ISST homestay risk matrix](#) and [ISST prohibited activities in homestay](#). Schools should communicate the list of

prohibited activities to homestay families. A detailed explanation of how these risks will be managed must be attached as a mandatory document in Excursion Planner.

DoE employees on ISSTs are not eligible to apply for any form of leave unless the conditions under the [Applying for Leave combined with Official International Travel](#) procedure are met.

Supervision

A student to supervising teacher ratio must be determined, taking into consideration the age, ability levels and support needs of the students travelling, the activities they are partaking in, the level of risk (as identified in the Risk Assessments) and destination country. This ratio will also support students using homestay by ensuring adequate on-call supervision.

The minimum requirement is one supervising teacher for every 10 students plus a contingency for supervision in the case of an emergency. Supervising volunteers are a welcome addition to the supervising team but are not legally responsible for the group, nor are tour operators or guides.

Sufficient supervision (including for emergency situations) must be identified and arranged for each activity in line with OneSchool's Excursion Planner. Supervising teachers must be available to students overseas at all times, and all supervising teachers and supervising volunteers must model and encourage behaviour that upholds the welfare and best interests of students.

Gender-balanced supervision ensures the wellbeing of students. There should be male supervising teachers where there are male students and female supervising teachers where there are female students. Supervising volunteers of appropriate gender may be used to promote gender-balanced supervision. Students and their families must be made aware of these arrangements prior to travel.

Vaccinations and medication

Information about relevant vaccinations can be found on the [Smartraveller](#) website, which also documents health requirements and risks in specific countries.

Alternatively, travellers may seek advice regarding vaccinations from their own doctor. DoE cannot provide advice regarding vaccinations.

Where a participant may not be able to be vaccinated, the principal, or RD/ED Regional Operations should assess the risk before approving any overseas travel.

Parents/carers must provide details of any prescribed medication being taken by students, including dosage, frequency, and any other relevant information. Medication must be provided to the responsible teacher prior to departure. These will then be distributed as required.

If it is necessary for the student to carry his/her own medication (e.g. asthma inhaler), it must be with the knowledge and consent of both the parents/carers and the supervising teachers.

For the purposes of Australian Customs, all medication must be supplied in original packaging with a doctor's note confirming the prescription and necessity to treat a medical condition. Check if the medication prescribed is legal in the places the ISST is travelling.

Travel documentation

All participants must ensure they hold a valid passport with at least 6 months validity beyond the intended return date to Australia.

International airline tickets are issued in the names which appear on individual passports.

The Responsible Officer must clarify with the travel agent, embassy or consulate of the relevant countries, any specific visa requirements.

The Responsible Officer must submit visa applications for all ISST participants.

Visa conditions are subject to change and applications need to be made well in advance of international travel.

It is expected that participating staff on an ISST will have their visa costs covered in the overall ISST costs.

Travel Insurance and travel advice

All travellers participating in an ISST must use [GoSafe Travel Insurance](#) to ensure consistency of benefits and assistance in an emergency situation. Prior to the purchase of travel insurance, all prospective travellers or parent/guardian must be issued with the [GoSafe Target Market Determination document](#). Participants undertaking international travel need to be aware of the extent and nature of travel insurance coverage by reading the [Product Disclosure Statement](#).

Please refer to the DoE [supply arrangements](#) (DoE employees only) OnePortal page for more information on the mandatory GoSafe Travel Insurance including frequently asked questions and pricing documents. International travel and health insurance cover is valid only for the period of travel. If the injury or illness of the employee persists on the employee's return home, please refer to the Claims & insurance section on the [WorkSafe](#) website.

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to purchase travel insurance for all participants. You must enter the email address of the individual insured (or parent/guardian) in the designated 'Travellers Details' field of the GoSafe website to ensure receipt of policy documentation by the insured party, and attach a copy of the insurance policy in the Attachments section of the OneSchool Excursion Planner.

Costings

Accountability

All ISSTs must be viable and fully funded prior to departure.

The school's Business Manager must be involved in all financial aspects of an ISST.

All documentation and records related to international travel, including invoices and receipts, need to be retained as per department's [Records management manual](#) (DoE employees only):

- These records are subject to internal audit and should be readily available for review.
- Due to the accountability associated with international travel, it is imperative that the accountable officer/supervisor is fully informed of all aspects of the ISST from inception to acquittal.

Financial records for ISSTs, including all expenditure as well as revenue received, must be fully reconciled and acquitted in OneSchool showing a nil balance on completion of the ISST:

- Shortfalls and overspends cannot be covered by school funds.
- If a shortfall was to occur, consideration is to be given to which non-school funded cost centre will pay the debt.
- Shortfalls and overspends are to be outlined in writing by the principal, to the parents/carers of students, along with a breakdown of expected costs.

Payments and funding

ISSTs are generally self-funded by the students.

Payments received from participants should preferably be received electronically.

ISST funds must only be spent on activities directly related to the ISST.

Participants with disability should not incur additional charges associated with providing the reasonable adjustments required for them to access and participate alongside their peers.

All school and P&C Association contributions must be detailed in the Excursion Planner, including the source of school funds (e.g. money raised from hosting study tours from overseas schools). Detailed costings must also be documented in the [ISST Costings template](#) (DoE employees only).

Deposits or any other travel related payments are not to be paid until the Excursion Planner has received final approval in OneSchool.

Should a cultural gift or donation be given as part of the ISST, approval/disclosure to participants must be given. Funds must be spent in accordance with the department's [Appropriate and ethical use of public resources](#) policy.

Free of Charge

Travel agents must identify in writing any concessions or Free of Charge (FOC) inclusions (e.g. airfares, accommodation, meals, in-country travel, entry fees) and this is to be fully documented and explained in the ISST application.

A FOC fare or reduced fare for an ISST should only be used for supervising teachers to avoid any Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) liability.

If there are no FOCs, students may be asked to subsidise the cost of teachers/supervisors within reason.

The intent of an ISST is important and must be maintained. Places should not be offered to non-DoE adults or students from non-state schools with the intent of lowering costs to individual participants or achieving participant numbers so that supervising teachers receive FOC places.

Subsidising

If students are subsidising the cost of teachers/supervisors, parents/carers must be advised in writing clearly outlining the scope of these costs and this documentation must be attached in the Attachments section of the OneSchool Excursion Planner. Passport and vaccination costs for teachers/supervisors, parents/carers must not be subsidised by students.

For the purpose of the ISST Excursion Planner, and the International Travel Report, subsidised costs are considered external funding, not departmental funding.

Fundraising

When a school or P&C Association is contributing towards the ISST, consideration is to be given to the equity of supporting a small number of students from the school population.

The principal must advise all participants, in writing, of the purpose of fundraising, whether by students or by the P&C Association, when it is to support an ISST with only a small number of students.

Fundraising undertaken by students must comply with the [Fundraising procedure](#).

For the purpose of the ISST Excursion Planner, and the International Travel Report, fundraising contributed by the P&C Association is considered external funding, not departmental funding.

Teacher Relief Scheme

Teacher Relief Scheme (TRS) days should not be funded through student contributions unless this has been declared to participants and they agree.

TRS costs must not be included in international travel costs.

General Ledger codes

Using the correct OneSchool general ledger (GL) codes allows for accurate data capture and meets annual reporting requirements. The international travel GL codes are:

527000	Travel OS Airfares	Costs associated with airfares overseas.
527002	Travel OS Expense - Other	Incidental costs incurred whilst on overseas travel including costs for staff development purposes. Includes passports, currency exchange fees, laundry, etc.
527003	Travel OS - Other Expenses - FBT	Other overseas travel expenses subject to Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) (e.g. entertainment).
527005	Travel OS Allowances	Allowances payable to officers travelling overseas on official duties (Refer to International Travelling, Relieving and Living Expenses (Directive 10/11)).
527006	Travel OS - Taxi, Bus, Train, Car Hire	Overseas travel fares for coach, taxi, rail, boat, etc.

Refunding deposits/fares

If an ISST is cancelled (as a whole or by any participants), any deposits/fares refunded to the school by the supplier must be distributed/returned to payees.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Goods or services that are acquired and consumed outside Australia are generally outside the scope of Australian GST.

Domestic legs of international travel are GST-free if they form part of an international travel arrangement. Note: domestic legs must appear on the same booking, itinerary or tickets.

An employee may seek reimbursement of certain expenses incurred overseas after return to Australia. Such reimbursements are to be treated as an acquisition with no GST incorporated into the price.

When accounting for corporate credit card expenses that were incurred overseas, these acquisitions should also be treated with no GST in the price.

The Corporate Taxation unit can be contacted on 1300 656 380 or via email

taxhelp.finance@qed.qld.gov.au, if more information is required.

Frequent flyer programs and lounge club memberships

Frequent flyer points or other loyalty program benefits accrued in the course of official travel may, at the discretion of the employee, be accrued using an employee's personal frequent flyer account. The use of these points for either business or personal travel is also at the discretion of the employee.

However, in booking travel, employees must ensure that:

- the flight was booked at competitive rates
- an airline was not favoured over another airline (to the detriment of budgets) based on an employee's membership of a particular airline's frequent flyer program
- air travel costs are kept to reasonable levels
- employees are not pursuing excessive travel with a view to maximising the accrual of frequent flyer points.

Travel arrangements before and during travel

Financial advice

Wherever possible, accommodation, transport and entry fees should be paid before departure from Australia.

Schools considering taking money overseas should research online and, where possible, seek advice from travel agencies in relation to any potential difficulties in accessing or converting funds at the intended travel destination.

Identify the most acceptable payment methods in your destination country, i.e. Corporate Card, EFTPOS, traveller's cheques, or travel money card

When planning for the trip, organisers should allow for contingencies as unforeseen costs that may arise while travelling.

Check credit limits and daily ATM/ debit card withdrawal limits to ensure they will be adequate.

Know fees and charges for currency exchanges and using a credit card overseas.

Overseas merchants tend to charge a higher conversion rate for converting your money into their currency.

Consider risks when determining how much, and the form of, money to take.

If travel is being undertaken to regional, rural or remote locations, make sure that you have sufficient cash as ATMs, banks and places to convert travellers' cheques may not be accessible.

Any person leaving or entering Australia must [declare](#) if they are carrying \$AU10,000 or more in cash in either Australian or foreign currency. Refer to the [AUSTRAC](#) website for taking cash overseas information.

Financial controls

Schools must use the services of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) for Corporate Cards, travel money cards or travellers' cheques.

Uncontrolled copy. Refer to the Department of Education Policy and Procedure Register at <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/international-school-study-tours-procedure> to ensure you have the most current version of this document.

To ensure a clear segregation between school and private funds, money for use on the trip must not be deposited into teachers' or supervisors' personal bank accounts.

When taking money overseas, documentary evidence and reconciliation is required. This evidence includes receipts, invoices and itemised statements, etc.

Money must be stored securely and accounted for daily.

Any money remaining after the trip is to be returned and banked by the school.

Student personal funds

Student personal funds can be loaded onto Travel Money Cards from the CBA.

The cards should be allocated to the supervising teachers accompanying the students, and used during the travel to obtain and disburse cash to students in manageable amounts.

Complete records should indicate how much each student has been allocated at the start of the trip, when money is disbursed, how much and to whom.

The records are to be returned to the school office at the end of the trip, reconciled and filed for audit purposes.

OneSchool Finance processing

Each Travel Money Card, travellers' cheque purchase or cash fund is to be added onto the 1000** imprest account on the school's balance sheet.

Standard acquittal processes are to be used at the end of the travel to reconcile and reduce the imprest account balance.

No acquittal processes are required where the student has custody of their own Travel Money Card.

Lost or stolen cards or cheques

If cards or travellers' cheques are lost or stolen, the officer in charge of the group must follow the guidelines provided by the issuing institution to report and recover the loss.

Students are to be assisted by staff travelling with the ISST in the case of any lost or stolen cards.

Taking money overseas

Money for use on the tour must not be provided to teachers or supervising adults for deposit into personal accounts.

Schools should ensure that forms of money to be taken overseas are organised well in advance to ensure availability by the travel date.

Money may be taken overseas in the following forms:

Departmental corporate card

A departmental [corporate card \(DoE employees only\)](#) may be issued to a supervising teacher.

The application forms must be forwarded at least three weeks prior to the travel to allow time for processing. Ensure that forms are complete and correct, and that the cardholder has completed the required [purchasing training \(DoE employees only\)](#).

Employees issued with corporate cards may incur appropriate expenses on their card while undertaking official international travel. More information regarding the use of the Queensland Government corporate card can be found on the department's corporate card OnePortal page.

Employees are required to retain receipts for the purpose of corporate card reconciliations and travel claims (including incidentals) and maintain a travel diary for reference purposes. It is recommended that travellers take a photo of receipts when they receive them should they become misplaced or illegible.

If you are applying for or already hold a departmental corporate card please advise the Corporate Card unit of your travel plans at corporatecard.finance@ged.qld.gov.au.

Cash advances are not available through a departmental corporate card.

Travel money card

Pre-paid CommBank [travel money cards \(DoE employees only\)](#) can be issued for the nominated currency of your destination.

Travel money cards can be used just like a debit card, to pay directly in shops or restaurants or to get cash out. Cash withdrawals are only available at ATMs or over the counter at a bank.

Additional funds can be deposited to the card account in emergent unforeseen circumstances.

Travel money cards are issued through CBA and can be acquired at specific CBA branches or can be applied for online. Contact the department's banking unit for advice Email: schoolbanking.finance@ged.qld.gov.au.

If making an application online, allow at least five working days for receipt of the card. Applications at specific branches can be processed on the spot.

Travellers cheques

American Express® Travelers Cheques are issued by the CBA.

Allow at least one week from lodging the application to receive the cheques.

Exchange rates are often less favourable for travellers' cheques.

Fees will be charged when travellers' cheques are converted into local currency.

Travellers' cheques are not as widely accepted as they once were. Research where they can be cashed and used at your destination.

Cash

Some cash may be required. Cash is essential for things like tipping, taxis, markets and smaller shops and restaurants that do not accept cards.

Cash can be converted at destination country but there may not always be an ATM or currency exchange available. It is recommended that supervising teachers get some cash for the currency of destination before departure.

Cash, either in Australian or foreign currency, should be limited to the requirements of the study tour where other forms of payment may not be readily available.

Monitor exchange rates for best conversions and be aware of commissions and fees.

Emergency contact details

DoE employees must ensure their emergency contact details are accurate and up to date.

DoE employees must ensure they have access to student emergency contact details, noting that OneSchool may not be accessible overseas to retrieve details in an emergency.

Unexpected return of a student

Parents/carers may be required to use travel insurance to cover any additional costs incurred.

Under no circumstances should any other participant of the ISST be asked to contribute toward additional costs of the returning student.

Cancelling an approved Excursion Planner

If an ISST is cancelled, the Responsible Officer will need to ensure a note is added to the Details section in the SST Details tab that trip is cancelled. The Excursion Planner should be submitted to the principal to mark as Cancelled/Not Approved. This will ensure Excursion Planners do not appear on reports or the Responsible Officer and principal do not receive a notification to complete an International Travel Report.

Post travel

Travel reporting

An International Travel Report (ITR) is required within 4 calendar weeks of returning to duty from an ISST to report on actual departmental costs. The ITR is to be completed in the [ISST Costings template \(DoE employees only\)](#). The ITR is to be approved by the principal and noted by the RD/ED Regional Operations, then submitted to the ITU at international.travel@qed.qld.gov.au. Evidence of approval must be uploaded to the Attachment section of the OneSchool Excursion Planner by the Responsible Officer.

The DoE Annual Report contains information on all official international travel undertaken by departmental officers, contractors or consultants during the relevant financial year. Actual departmental costs incurred while travelling overseas must be recorded and reported. DoE has an exemption from annual reporting of employee international travel for the purpose of ISSTs where there are no departmental funds used.

Travel expenses

Officers undertaking approved international travel may claim for costs incurred while overseas on presentation of the required documentary evidence in line with the [International Travelling, Relieving and Living Expenses \(Directive 10/11\)](#).

All possible costs need to be factored into the expenditure/subsidy tab of the Excursion Planner ensuring that funds are available to meet the anticipated expenditure.

TRS or higher duty costs are not to be included as part of international travel costs. No special funds within DoE are available to meet unanticipated or unexpected expenditure or allowances.

The Goods and Services Voucher form (available from school Business Manager) is to be used when claiming international travel expenses and allowances.

Time limit on claim

Uncontrolled copy. Refer to the Department of Education Policy and Procedure Register at <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/international-school-study-tours-procedure> to ensure you have the most current version of this document.

Claims will not be paid without the approval of the delegated officer unless they are submitted within 12 months of:

- the date of completion of the tour
- incurring the expense
- the conclusion of the circumstances leading to the claim.

Contacts

International Travel Unit

DE International

Phone: (07) 3513 5748

Email:

international.travel@qed.qld.gov.au

Fringe Benefits Tax

Corporate Taxation Unit

Phone: 1300 656 380

Email: taxhelp.finance@qed.qld.gov.au

Airfare and accommodation bookings

Corporate Travel Management (CTM)

Phone: 1300 368 145 (includes after hours service and group booking support)

Email: qldgov@travelctm.com

GoSafe Travel Insurance

Website: <http://www.gosafeinsurance.com.au/>

Email: travel@gosafetravelinsurance.com.au

Telephone: (07) 3054 1010