

ANSWERING *Parent Questions*



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When planning a student tour, there's one thing that you can be certain of: parents will ask questions. Knowing how to accurately answer these tour-related inquiries can be a huge stress point for Group Leaders. To help you out, we teamed up with our expert Tour Specialists to put together answers to the questions most frequently asked by parents. Here's what we'll help you cover:

Questions About Medical Accommodations

Food allergies Physical disabilities and handicaps
Dietary restrictions Social & emotional disorders
Medications

Questions About Behavioral Procedures

Disciplinary problems
Bullying
Homesickness

Questions About Emergency Situations

Contacting students in case of emergency back home Emergency accommodations
Contacting parents in case of emergency on tour
Emergency response plans

Questions About Alternative Participation

Parent participation
Students forgoing activities

Questions About Refund Policies

In case of parent cancellation
In case of Group Leader cancellation
In case of cancellation due to a major event

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Medical Accommodations

My child has food allergies or a dietary restriction. How will meal options be addressed?

When registering for your tour in Brightspark Travel's portal, you'll come across a "Special Needs" section and a text box labeled "Allergies/Dietary Restrictions and Special Needs." Enter your child's dietary needs here. Also, let your Group Leader know about your child's dietary needs.

Once made aware of dietary restrictions, Brightspark Travel will send information about them to all of the restaurants your child will visit on tour. All of the restaurants Brightspark Travel works with are equipped to deal with food allergies. Your child should also remind their Group Leader and Tour Director of their allergies while on tour.

How will medications be handled? Will there be refrigeration available for medications?

Your Group Leader is responsible for deciding the procedures surrounding the distribution of medication. Often times the distribution of medication is dependent on the nature of the medication and the age of the children. If a medication requires refrigeration, Brightspark Travel will arrange for a fridge to be in the hotel—just be sure to notify your Group Leader about this need during registration.

My child has a physical disability or handicap. Will they be accommodated on tour? What if my child is injured prior to departure?

Once notified of a child's needs, Brightspark Travel can arrange for services such as wheelchairs, ADA accessible coaches and ADA accessible hotel rooms. Most major attractions are accessible and have modified programs that meet ADA needs.

How are social/emotional disorders accommodated?

Once a social/emotional disorder is disclosed to your Group Leader or to Brightspark Travel, Brightspark Travel will work with your Group Leader and families to accommodate needs and identify which tour components may need modification.

Behavioral Protocol

How is bullying addressed?

If a child is bullied, they are advised to notify a Group Leader, chaperone and Tour Director. Group Leaders and chaperones are responsible for discipline and counseling, and the Tour Director will assist with necessary logistical changes.

How is homesickness addressed? Will I have any contact with my child?

Cell phone usage is up to the discretion of the Group Leader, but if they are allowed cell phones, students may call home whilst they are not touring. If students are not allowed cell phones, they may borrow a phone to call the 800 number listed on their safety lanyard. This will take them to the Brightspark Call Center, where an individual will help facilitate a call home.

For parents who miss their children, many Group Leaders create private Facebook or other social media pages that feature photos and updates throughout the day. Group Leaders can also give cell phone and contact information to parents.

How are disciplinary problems handled? Who is responsible for my child if he or she gets into trouble?

The Group Leader is responsible for handling discipline. Tour Directors cannot directly handle discipline, though they will notify Group Leaders should anything occur. In the rare case in which a child threatens to cause harm to themselves or others, they will be sent home at their parents' expense.



Emergency Situations

Will I be able to contact my child in case of emergency?

Yes. Cellphone usage and distribution of Group Leader/chaperone contact information is up to the discretion of the Group Leader. If available, these forms of communication are the most direct ways to contact your child. If not, call the 800 number provided to you by Brightspark Travel. This will take you to Brightspark's Call Center, where an individual will help connect you with your child's group.

How will I be contacted in case of emergency?

A call will be made to the emergency contact number provided in the case of an emergency.

What are Brightspark Travels's procedures in case of emergencies? *(E.g. medical occurrences, natural disasters, acts of terrorism etc.)*

Brightspark Travel has response plans for major emergencies. Our response plans were developed in accordance with the best practices outlined by the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To help enact our response plans, we have a team of health and safety experts who are on the ground. These individuals have undergone extensive incident response training and regularly practice "mock" drills.

If an event occurs and students are unable to return home at the scheduled time, what will Brightspark Travel do to assist them?

Brightspark Travel will take care of plans like hotels, dinner reservations and transportation. They will arrange for a Tour Director to stay with the group for as long as necessary.

Alternative Participation

Can parents participate in a tour without being a chaperone?

This is up to the discretion of your school and Group Leader. Many sponsors prefer that adults act as chaperones.

Can my student forgo participation in a part of the tour? (E.g. Can they spend an evening with a relative instead of participating in one night's activity? Can they fly back on their own if they would like to stay in the location longer?)

Students are not allowed to forgo an activity during the middle of a tour. They are allowed to come early or stay late, however, it may affect costs, and parents must sign a Termination of Responsibilities paper. This signifies that Brightspark Travel is not responsible for anything that happens after a child has departed from the group.

Refunds

What is the refund policy in the case that I cancel my child's tour?

Brightspark Travel's general refund policy offers partial refunds to individuals who cancel over 45 days prior to their tour's departure. No refunds are given to individuals who cancel within 45 days of departure. Parents may purchase Refund Guarantee Protection (RGP), an optional add-on for domestic tours. With RGP, parents receive a 100% refund on all tour payments*when they cancel at any time prior to departure, for any reason. Visit Brightspark Travel's website for more information.

RGP is not available for international tours.

*less the cost of RGP

What is the refund policy in the case that my Group Leader cancels my child's tour?

Brightspark Travel's general refund policy is the same in the case of individual or group-cancelled tours. See above for more details.

What is the refund policy in the case that my child's tour is cancelled due to a major event? (E.g. Extreme weather, government shutdown.)

In the case of a major event, Brightspark Travel will, if possible, try to reschedule your tour on a different date, or will plan in alternative tour to a different destination. Exact plans depend on the situation.

Other

Will school rules that are not covered by Brightspark Travel's rules still be enforced?

Brightspark Travel will respect the rules that organizations want us to follow.

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