

JKI/LC

27 March 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

Thank you for attending the information evening for Iceland on Monday 25 March, I hope it was both useful and informative for you and your child.

Following the evening, I thought it would be useful to provide a collective response to the questions which were posed either during or after the session, particularly the questions which required further information from the tour operator 'Rayburn'.

For students requiring new or updated passports prior to the Iceland visit:

Name and date of birth of all students as they do/will appear on their passports are required at the point of booking – this is covered on the student details form which was attached to the initial letter. The actual passport number is not needed until next year, around six weeks before travelling. This would be for the API on flights so there is plenty of time to renew or apply for passports before this is required. Not having a current valid passport will not hinder your place on this visit at the point of booking.

Hospital access:

There are several hospitals spread out in the South West of Iceland (the area we will be travelling) and a hospital called 'Heilbrigðisstofnun Suðurlands' in Selfoss is located where we will be staying. We should never be more than 1 - 2 hours from a hospital at most. There are risk assessments and formal procedure to follow to minimise the risk of an accident and the coach will always be with us to provide transport.

Accommodation:

(Response directly from the tour operator)

Selfoss Hostel is a budget hotel. I appreciate the concern with the word hostel, however the majority of accommodation in Iceland are hostel's (fortunately, they are far beyond the hostel's we think of in the UK and the rest of Europe). The Selfoss is one of our preferred suppliers that we have worked with for many years and we have had 100's of groups stay with them in the past. In addition, all the accommodation we use is fully audited to give reassurance to parents and party leaders (we would not send a group somewhere we would not stay ourselves). We are also members of the School Travel Forum, a group of leading school tour operator's that promote good practice and safety in school travel. To be part of this, all Assured Members of the STF adhere to a rigorous Code of Practice and Safety Management Standards. I have included a link to a blog on the Selfoss Hostel if any parents would like to access this: <https://www.rayburntours.com/blog/2019/03/12/the-ideal-base-for-your-icelandic-adventure/>

See overleaf

Mobile phones and spending money:

Mobile phone signal has not been noted as an issue, however with all school visits, mobile use will be restricted to non-teaching time. In addition, you need to be aware of potential roaming charges both on calls and data. Current deals with charges within Europe may well change following Brexit and Iceland is not an EU member country. Insurance will not cover mobile phone damage or loss, so they will be taken at your own risk.

As students will be full board and all the excursions are included, spending money is purely a matter of preference and students only really need to think about the UK side for food, souvenirs and potentially a small extra amount for just in case. Finer details of mobile phones and spending money will be confirmed nearer to the departure stage of the visit planning.

Iceland is ranked as one of the safest countries to visit in the world according to the home office and I know the students will have an unforgettable experience.

I hope you find this information useful, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me in school on the number on reverse of this letter.

Yours faithfully



Mrs J Kingsland
Subject Leader of Geography