

# A Guide to Health & Safety

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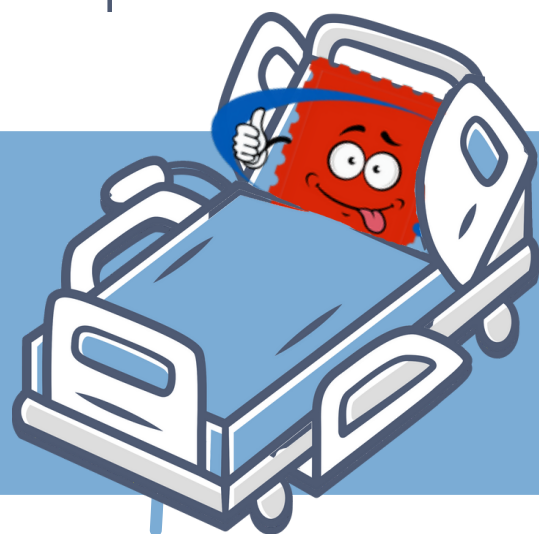
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# INTRODUCTION

The following notes are intended to keep you safe on your trip. Sections of these notes apply to students travelling with Group Leaders on Mixed School Group trips, or Tailor-made closed school group trips. Other sections apply to students travelling independently on Language Courses, Work and Study packages, Internships or Au Pair and Study packages.

This is Stamie. Stampie didn't read the health & safety guide and now is in A&E after trying to dry his hair in the bath.

*Don't be like Stampie*





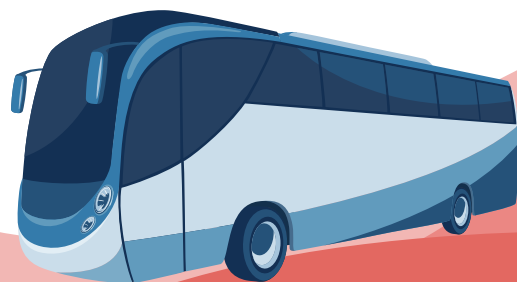
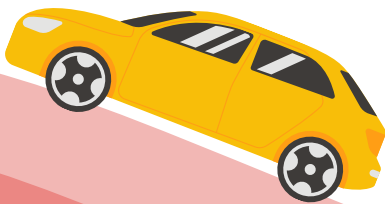
# TRAVEL SAFETY

## Roads

The most dangerous thing to do whilst you are away is cross the road. You should remember that crossing the road on the continent involves traffic travelling on the opposite side of the road from the UK and that as a result your reflex to “look right, look left and look right again” before crossing the road if the way is clear, needs to be reversed in Europe. Many forget this basic principle because they are trained to instinctively “look right” and take most care initially towards any traffic approaching from the left before crossing the road. It is especially likely to happen when you are in a group or talking to a friend whilst walking across the street. A momentary lapse of concentration could prove fatal. When crossing roads, be aware that many European cities have bike lanes and e-scooters and bikes that may be moving fast in these lanes. Try to avoid crossing between parked cars. Be aware that in some cities it is forbidden to cross the road at a pedestrian crossing unless the “green man” is showing. This is particularly important in Germany where it is very frowned upon to break this rule as it sets a poor example to young children!

## Coaches

It is the responsibility of each passenger to wear a seatbelt where one is provided. Listen to the instructions from the driver or Group Leader and observe these instructions. Temperature is very difficult to manage on a coach and you may find that areas of the coach are hotter or colder than others. If this is the case and you are prone to travel sickness, we recommend sitting near the front of the coach and looking out the front window. The driver will adjust the temperature as best as possible. Do not distract the driver whilst the vehicle is moving. In particular, refrain from taking flash photography at night which can be particularly distracting. Avoid playing loud music or any unruly behaviour (this is not usually an issue on our trips given the age and maturity of the students travelling.)



## Bikes and E-Scooters

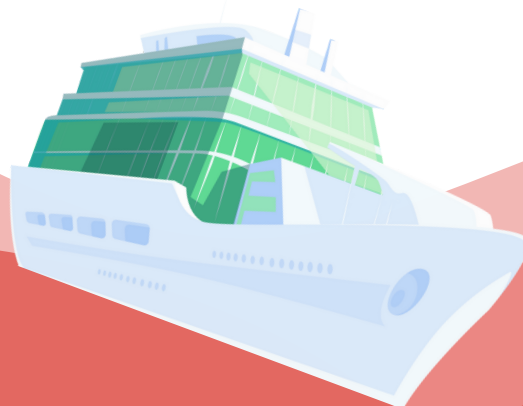
In most cities, it is easy and common to hire bikes and E-scooters. This can be great fun, timesaving and practical but you should consider that riding a bike abroad on the road is not without risks. We strongly recommend wearing a helmet (and it is compulsory in many cities). If you choose to hire equipment, you do so at your own risk.

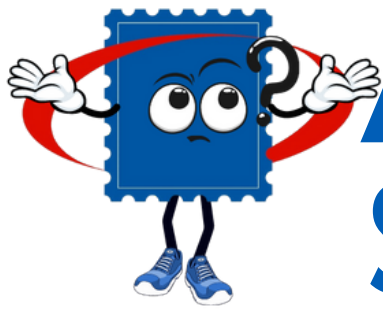
## Ferry

On the ferry you should take care on the stairways. When returning to the coach there may be many hundreds of people crowding the steep stairways and accidents can happen. **Take note of deck number and staircase colour/ symbol** to help you find the coach on departure. It's helpful to know the route aka the deck level and stairway that leads back to the coach. Your coach driver and Group Leader will usually announce this on the PA but you should observe this yourself too. Make sure you start making your way back to the coach as soon as you are instructed to by the ship's announcements. The coach has to disembark from the ferry when instructed. If all passengers are not on board those passengers have to leave the ferry as foot passengers and meet up with the coach at the passenger terminal area. Ideally you will have already met with your Group Leader on board! If you are separated from the group you must contact the Group Leader by WhatsApp as soon as possible. Listen to the Safety Announcements on board and read the assembly and safety notices that are displayed. Out on the deck there are safety rails but you should take extreme care not to go too close to the edge. Never go out on deck in bad weather or in the dark.

## Aeroplanes

Listen to the safety announcements carefully and observe all the instructions given. In particular, wear your seatbelt when you are instructed to do so. Make sure that your possessions are gathered at the end of the flight. (Including your passport – don't leave it in the seat table!) When departing the plane, if you are in a group, meet the group at the passport control queues.





# ACCOMMODATION SAFETY

## Read the Signs

All hotels have safety equipment and evacuation notices and signs. From the very first moment you arrive, read the signs and notices carefully and take note of where the evacuation and assembly points are in the event of a fire or needing to raise the alarm.

## Assembly Points

It is quite usual for hotels on the continent not to specify an assembly point in the event of fire evacuation. Check where the nearest assembly point is! Emergency Telephone numbers for Police, Fire and Ambulance Services are kept at hotel reception and are in the student guide issued in your MyAccount.

## Fire and Lifts

Normally in the UK there are signs in the lift to tell you not to use the lift in the event of an emergency. In Europe such signs are less common. Please be aware! Using emergency stairwells marked by signs instead.

## Smoking

The principle cause of fire in homes and public places is smoking. For this reason and as a courtesy to others **you must not smoke in your accommodation.**

## Windows and Balconies

Extreme care should be taken when near windows and balconies. **Never threaten to push someone near a balcony or window. Never lean out over a balcony or out of a window.**



## Electrical Safety

Never use hair dryers or electrical appliances with wet hands. Do not overload the electrical system and please report any faults or concerns to the accommodation staff.

## Security in hotels

Always lock your room when you go out and at night. Keep your possessions and money hidden in a safe place. Do not leave valuables on display. Most hotels will have a safe in the room

## Tidiness

Slips and spills are still the major cause of accidents. To help prevent them: don't leave things lying around, keep bedrooms and coach corridor areas and gangways tidy and clear. Clean up spills straight away. Always close drawers.

## Host Accommodation

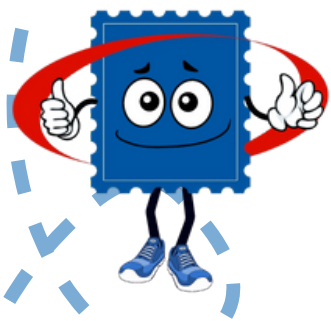
Normally students are housed 1,2 or 3 students per family. All families and accommodation are vetted by our Homestay Coordinators for Health and Safety but students should still be vigilant about Health and Safety in the home which is where many accidents occur (as they do in the UK). If you have any concerns feel free to raise them with the Group Leader, accommodation coordinator at the Language School or Blue Stamp Travel head office. Be aware that some aspects that might be raised are cultural differences. Standards of safety must be maintained but some things that may appear unusual are not necessarily safety concerns (for example, plugs on the continent do not have a third safety pin - this is usual).

## Kitchens and Bathrooms

The kitchen usually has the most hazards because of hot food, water, utensils, cookers, and possible spillages, slips or sharp knives/tins. Wet or slippery bathrooms are another hazard. Exercise caution in these areas.







# WORK SAFETY

It is the responsibility of every student to ensure that they are vigilant in their workplace. In the majority of placements there are no more risks than in your own front room, however, in some there are work related hazards of which you should be aware. When working as advised there are no greater risks at your work placement than in any other workplace.

Blue Stamp Travel follow the advice and guidance provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regarding Work Experience and Employment of Young Workers. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/index.htm>

## Raising Concerns

All placements have been inspected for Health and Safety by the appropriate authorities, but it is the responsibility of every student to ensure that they are vigilant in the work place and that they are alert to potential hazards and foolish or risky behaviour or conditions. Take note of Health and Safety notices, signs and instructions at your placement and make sure you are aware of local safety practices. Report any worries or concerns at work immediately to your Work Supervisor in the first instance and to the Blue Stamp Travel Head Office if the matter is not dealt with. Never work in an environment or with tools or machinery that you consider unsafe.

**Make sure that you have the telephone numbers for the Blue Stamp Travel Head Office and the emergency 24-hour contact numbers noted down somewhere**





## Protective Equipment and Clothing

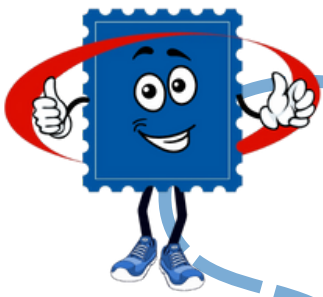
Blue Stamp work placements rarely require specialist safety equipment but on the occasions that they do, ear defenders, eye protectors, dust masks, overalls, safety shoes/boots and helmets may be supplied to protect you (where necessary). Wear them! It may feel strange, and you wouldn't win any fashion contests, but you'll have a better chance of staying out of hospital or being ill. It is more common to be required to wear an apron, gloves or occasionally a hairnet if working with food.

## Machinery

You should only operate machinery after you have been trained and given permission to use it. Do not use a machine if you do not feel safe in doing so or if you do not understand any instructions that you have been given. Follow the instructions exactly when using the machine and use it only for the jobs it is intended to do. Do not take shortcuts to save time. Make sure you know where all the controls are and what they do. When using any machine, know how to stop it in an emergency. Safety guards are fitted to machines to protect you. They must be used. If you think that any moving part could cause damage, ask your supervisor if there should be a guard. Always follow the systems set up for adjusting or cleaning machines. Make sure that no one else can switch a machine on again while you are working on it.

Do not distract people who are using machinery. Never use compressed air to clean machinery. Tell your supervisor at once if you think a machine is not working correctly or is unsafe. Don't wear dangling chains or loose clothing which could get caught in moving parts. Keep your hair tucked under a cap or tied back.





# LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

## Curfew Times / Lights-out

Please check with your homestay / hotel reception / residence / Group Leader if you have to be back by a specific time. Curfews are set for a reason. If you are tired or out very late it is possible that you put yourself in greater risk. This can be avoided. (It is also courtesy when staying in a homestay to respect the host's curfew.)

## Medicines

Always take any medication with you that you use regularly or you are likely to need when abroad. If you are on prescribed medication or seeing your GP / Consultant on a regular / periodic review you should have completed a pre-existing medical condition declaration form and sent it to the insurance company.

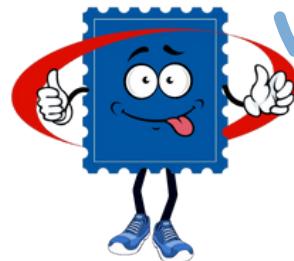
It is a good idea to carry a small first aid kit on your travels which could include paracetamol and indigestion tablets (unfamiliar food may affect you). Pharmacies are used to diagnosing and offering treatments for a lot of common ailments. Consult a pharmacy if you need medical attention. For more serious concerns, if you require hospital treatment or are suffering with something you cannot easily manage, consult your host, Blue Stamp Group Leader or the Blue Stamp head office for support.

## Alcohol and Drug Abuse

If you drink alcohol or take drugs your judgement may be impaired. It is strictly forbidden to drink to excess or take illegal drugs whilst on a Blue Stamp Travel trip. Drinking more than 2 standard measures or taking illegal drugs may invalidate your Travel Insurance Policy in the event of an accident or injury. There is a specific exclusion for claims that arise whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. See your Insurance Policy document for details.



# BEING STREETWISE



## Money

Take care when handling money. It is advised not to take too much money out and about and, don't flash your wallet about. Pickpockets/ thieves are uncommon but exist in every city- tourists and younger people are more likely to be targeted. Some cities are more renowned for pick-pockets than others (these exist in most cities even in the UK). Try to avoid the areas of town that may have a reputation – locals or your Group Leader may advise you. Additionally, any strangers that may approach you. You may be required to carry your passport/ID Card on you at all times when abroad. Keep it safe and do not leave it unattended.

## Stranger Danger

Beware of people who come up to you and ask you the time or something that seems relatively innocuous, to engage you in conversation. Your style of dress (young English adult 'out on the town'), or other mannerisms may have been spotted a mile away and once you speak to them, they will know from your accent that you are foreign and probably English – this can make you more vulnerable if you are not prepared. If you think that a stranger looks suspicious or undesirable or if you do not want to speak to them, you should ignore them completely (don't even look at them) and stare straight ahead. If you avoid looking at them or getting into conversation, they will think you are a local (or at worst, a bit rude!) Once engaged in a conversation it is sometimes difficult to get out of it.

**Never give your contact details, social media profiles or address to anyone that you do not know.**

## 'Dress Code'

On some rare occasions, local boys and men have followed girls or intimidated girls with unwanted attention. Sadly, whilst it is of course completely unacceptable for this to be the case, it is sometimes the style of clothing that draws this attention. For this reason, we would encourage to keep this in mind when packing. on where you are attracting unwanted attention, try to move to a busy area, shop or public space and seek the attention of other locals who will usually be very willing to help you. Contact your Group Leader or in the event of a serious event contact the police. Always report the incident to either your Group Leader or the Blue Stamp head office after the event. Make a mental (or ideally written) note of as many details as possible.





**Blue Stamp Travel are committed to the health and safety of students and the BST team members. If you require any clarity or have any queries about this document or health and safety in general, please do not hesitate to contact the office.**



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