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Joint Statement to Schools on Educational Visits and the impact of COVID-19

We represent a range of organisations who value and recognise the benefits that educational visits play in the development of young people and are working to ensure that we manage the consequences of the restrictions currently placed upon us in terms of travel and social distancing while looking to ensure the sustainable access to educational visits into the future.

As of the published date above, a summary of the current situation is:

1. The DfE have stated that Schools will remain closed until further notice.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>
2. The FCO advises against all non-essential travel worldwide. This applies for an indefinite period and The latest [guidance on social distancing](#) also recommends avoiding all non-essential domestic trips and use of public transport, where possible.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#history>
3. The DfE is currently advising against domestic trips (residential and non-residential) for children under 18 organised by educational settings.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice-for-educational-settings>
4. Businesses providing accommodation (including hotels, hostels, B&Bs, campsites, caravan parks, boarding houses and short term lets) should now be closed for commercial use
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-advice-for-accommodation-providers>
5. The current measures will remain in place until at least 7th May
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-16-april-2020>

This guidance means that schools and other educational establishments will be unable to undertake educational visits for an indefinite period, while also presenting a huge challenge to many providers. This will be the case at least until the Government signals any significant change to its advice. A further update is expected by 7th May, but it appears very unlikely that social distancing and travel restrictions will be relaxed at that point.

Schools, employers, providers and parents are all under extreme financial pressure at this time and there are a very complex range of financial transactions in place surrounding educational visits both at home and abroad. As a group, we are trying to coordinate our own approaches to the current situation while also working closely with a number of external organisations such as the DfE, ABTA, FCA and liaising with teaching unions and others.

Visits will need to be curtailed. In recovering any non-refundable element of an educational visit that can no longer go ahead some schools may be able to make a claim on their insurance and the Financial Conduct Authority have informed us that they would expect Insurance companies to be *'fair and show flexibility in the treatment of their customers, particularly in the way that they respond to claims in the current circumstances'*.

It is in all of our interests, but most importantly the interests of our young people and their families, that we arrive at a solution to this, which is fair to all parties, rather than one or other of the parties bearing the entire burden of the financial loss caused by these unprecedented circumstances, which are beyond all of our control. We need to emerge from this situation in a position where the huge value of educational visits plays a key role in the recovery process we will have to go through, especially so for young people.

