

Easter Ski Tour 2020 Information

Who Can Apply

Initially, the tour will be open to skiers and snowboarders who will be Forms I to VI in session 2019/20. Pupils who will be in Junior 2 (and maybe even Junior 1) in session 2019/20 may get the opportunity to apply, although this is dependent upon the uptake of places by Senior School pupils – this is an unfortunate effect of the popularity of the Tour in recent years, and at this stage it is worth pointing out that recent trips have proved to be very popular, with over 100 Senior School pupils travelling.

In recent years the standard of our pupils' skiing and snowboarding has been extremely good. We are keen to take novice skiers, but we do not take absolute beginners on Tour. Thus any pupil who cannot ski at present, or who has limited experience, must undertake a series of lessons at a dry slope (such as Firpark or Polmont), or indoors at The Snow Factor (at Xscape/InTu, near Glasgow) and reach at least Level 3 standard by January 2020 – in practice, this means being able to use the ski tow and to make confident, controlled, linked snow-plough turns from the top of the slope at a reasonable speed on skis, or if snowboarding, be able to turn on both toe and heel sides in control. This policy is in the interest of the tour member in order to get the most enjoyment and experience out of the Tour, and we have found in the past that most skiers who achieve this level of skiing will usually make very good progress on snow. Obviously we do not want parents to pay a large sum of money for the Tour only to find that their son or daughter does not have the skills or ability or interest to enjoy it, or get the most out of it.

EXAM CANDIDATES - Pupils who will be in Forms IV, V and VI in session 2019/20 should think very carefully before applying – the Tour takes place during the first week of the Easter holidays prior to the SQA Exams (in 2019, the SQA Exam Diet starts on 25th April), and in recent years a significant number of pupils (particularly those in Form V) have withdrawn at short notice after the Christmas break to concentrate on their academic work. This causes considerable disruption, as Tour Leaders have to try to find replacements at a time when the final details are required by the travel company, and unfortunately there would be an inevitable loss of deposit, and perhaps a larger sum.

Booking Form

Please print the application form from the Ski Tour pages of the school's website and return it to Mr Lumsden before **Monday 26th November 2018**.

Completion and return of the form does not constitute a contract on our part to provide a place on the Tour - it is merely an application for a place. If there are too many applications then places will be allocated by taking names out of a hat, and it is regretted that some pupils may be disappointed, but we are strictly limited to the capacity of the hotel. Once a place is confirmed for your child(ren), a deposit of £275 will be requested via ParentPay, and this should be paid by Monday 10th December 2018.

Recent Tours have been oversubscribed, but due to the number of pupils who withdraw (for a whole variety of reasons), everyone who applied has eventually been offered a place.



Our Hotel

We are returning again to the [Clubhotel Le Piolet](#). This is a modern hotel, offering door-step access to the slopes, and it is located just across from La Croisette, the main covered shopping centre in the resort. Access to the ski area is usually by means of an easy piste running past the hotel down to a high speed chair and gondola giving fast access to the two main ski areas in Les Menuires.

The rooms are simply furnished but all have en-suite facilities and most accommodate 4 pupils although there are some larger rooms.

Three good meals per day are provided in the hotel's restaurant which conveniently sits our entire party in one sitting, and which also provides a superb Alpine view towards Val Thorens.

Best of all, Le Piolet has some very spacious lounge areas making it ideal for Apres Ski and for general socialising.

The Ski Area

Les Menuires is a resort high (1800 - 3000m) in the popular 'Three Valleys', reputedly the largest ski area in the world. The resort has some 80 miles of pistes, 35 modern lifts and an excellent snow record with a very large and increasing quantity of snow making equipment for added security. Every time we go there seem to have been major improvements since the previous visit.

Additionally, our party will all have the full 'Three Valleys' lift pass so that we will be able to ski in the neighbouring resorts of Meribel, Val Thorens and Courchevel - the full area is immense having over 400 miles of piste and 150 lifts! Most of our pupils make extensive use of the full area, although this obviously does depend on ability!

Les Menuires itself has an excellent range of pistes for the intermediate and advanced skiers, and recent improvements have now made it very good for the less experienced skiers as well. There are some good long blue (intermediate) and green (beginner) runs but it is the 'reds' that probably provide the best sport. There are several distinct areas each having their own characteristics - for example Mont de La Chambre provides probably the most popular runs down whilst 'La Masse' is a huge North facing snow-trap area and has some great skiing possibilities, especially in the afternoon.

The pistes on the Meribel side are always popular because of their length. Les Menuires and Meribel both have excellent Snow Parks which most pupils will want to visit at least once during the week. Val Thorens is the highest resort in France and there are amazing runs down from the glacier and from the top of the Cime de Caron cable car.

Apres Ski

The fun does not end when the chairlifts stop for the night. Every evening, between dinner and bed-time, there is an activity, organised by both Academy staff and the local SkiBound representatives. Activities on previous Tours have included - SWIMMING, BASKETBALL, BINGO, TABLE TENNIS, INDOOR OLYMPICS, TREASURE HUNT, KARAOKE, DISCO, QUIZ, BADMINTON....

Educational Benefits

We believe that every participant on our Ski Tours will not only have a fantastic sporting experience, but will also have an educational experience which will be a memorable part of their life.

They will be learning and improving their skills in an exciting sport that they will hopefully want to participate in for life.

They will experience the joy of moving around in some of the most magnificent Alpine scenery in the world, and for many pupils, this will be the first experience of a full week away from home, but thankfully home sickness has never been an issue!

Being part of the Tour is being part of a team, not just for a few hours but for a whole week. Everyone learns to be well organised, tidy, on time and positive in attitude for the full week. Many parents have commented in the past that their son or daughter has come back from a tour much more mature and appreciative of working well with other people.

Physical Fitness

The physical fitness benefits of snowsports are obvious. We expect all participants to take a full part in the activities during the day so almost everyone, pupils and staff, will come back from the tour with the kind of mellow fatigue that comes from sustained and demanding, yet enjoyable, activity. On the 2018 Tour, however, we did find that the level of fitness of a number of pupils prevented them from fully enjoying all that was on offer. There are many ways our pupils can improve their fitness before the 2020 Tour – through the many co-curricular clubs on offer at school, or by using the fitness suite and the spin bike classes (many staff did this before the 2018 Tour), or by simply walking, running, cycling, or swimming in the months prior to the Tour.

A Typical Day – also see [Ski Bou n d 's Pa ren t In for ma t i on pa g e](#)

- Rise and Shine at 7.30am
- Breakfast at 8am (Buffet, continental style)
- Tidy rooms after breakfast ready for room inspection
- Decide on afternoon outing from the various choices for the day
- Ski with Ski Group teacher from 9am to 11am - Morning Groups are organised by ability and age
- A quick snack and drink break
- 2 hour Ski Group lesson with ESF Ski School from 11am until 1pm
- Hot, cooked lunch back at the hotel – packed lunches are available for group expeditions
- Ski from 2pm to 5pm with friends and teachers – Pupils choose their own groups in the afternoon
- Shower at hotel
- Shopping in La Croisette
- 3 Course served Dinner from 6.30pm to 7.30pm
- Evening activity
- Soft drink in the bar area? A game of pool? Jenga? Video games?
- Bedtime 10pm (Form III/IV)
- A well-earned sleep

Safety

Skiing is an adventurous sport and obviously has risks. We take safety very seriously and so we budget the Tour on at least a 1:7 staff/pupil ratio. The vast majority of our skiing staff have been on several previous tours to the resort and thus have a very good knowledge of the Les Menuires area and what the pupils in their care are capable of.

A full Risk Assessment is carried out in advance of departure. For the last six Tours we have insisted that all pupils wear helmets when they are on the slopes. Helmets are available for hire at the hotel (free of charge), but most pupils chose to bring their own.

We pay a supplement for a 1:8 average ratio in the lessons to ensure that the professional French Ski Instructors from the ESF have reasonably sized groups, especially for the lower ability skiers. The normal ski holiday ratio is 1:12.

Medical care and rescue facilities in the resort are excellent and are backed up by an excellent insurance policy.

Insurance

SkiBound provide an excellent insurance policy, but the 2019/20 season details are still being finalised. The details of this season's policy are shown [here](#), and the new policy will be very similar. A copy of the key details of the policy will be provided to parents a few weeks before departure.

As with any travel insurance nowadays, the policy may be subject to an additional premium if the tour member has pre-existing conditions. These must be declared to the insurance company and they may request payment from you for the additional risk. (On the 2018 Tour, Under 18s, were exempt from having to declare pre-existing conditions, but the 2020 Tour may be different).

You must contact the insurance company yourselves and the Tour organisers cannot be held responsible for any problems in the event of a claim not being allowed because a pre-existing condition was not declared.

Cancellations

There are always a number of tour members who find it necessary to cancel their place. Until 1st October 2019, we are pleased to be able to make a full refund on any cancellation for any reason, provided that a replacement is found. After this date, a charge is made by SkiBound for any name changes. Replacements cannot be made later than 30 days before the tour so full cancellation charges will always apply after that date – this is similar to any holiday booking.



We always endeavour to find replacements, but late cancellations, as well as being inconvenient, are obviously more difficult to replace.

The insurance policy covers cancellation for medical, redundancy or certain other reasons and has **no excess on medical claims**.

Please note that the insurance does not cover cancellation claims because of a worry over risk of war, terrorism or disease. SkiBound and Dollar Academy obviously take advice from The Foreign Office about any serious risks to travel.

Pricing

Our tour company is SkiBound, part of the Travelopia group of companies, and the biggest school groups ski holiday company in the UK.

The fully inclusive price of £1375 includes:

- Coach from Dollar Academy to Airport (return)
- Flight from Edinburgh or Glasgow to airport close to Les Menuires (return)
- Scottish flight supplement
- Coach transfer from airport to Les Menuires (return)
- All taxes and fees

- Full Board (3 meals a day) hotel accommodation
- 6 days 'Three Valleys' lift pass
- 2 hours Instruction with 'Ecole de Ski Francais' for 6 days
- 1 to 8 (average) group ski instruction ratio
- 6 days ski and boot hire
- Some evening entertainment charges
- Insurance Policy

Not included:

- Passport (and possibly a visa for non-EC passports)
- Ski Clothing
- Pocket Money (£90 recommended last time)
- Lift pass surcharge if over 18 on 4th April 2020 (to be advised)
- Supplement for hiring snowboarding equipment (currently £45)
- Airline carriage for personal ski/snowboard equipment (£40 in 2018)
- Airline Passenger Duty, currently £13, and currently only charged to passengers aged 16 and over

Please note that the return flight, insurance policy and ski hire are part of the negotiated package price and we are unable to give any reduction if these are not required.



How To Pay

The tour cost of £1375 is payable as follows:

Deposit: £275 deposit to be paid via ParentPay by Monday 10th December 2018 once a place for your child(ren) has been confirmed.

Full payment: A balance of £1100 to be paid via ParentPay before 1st November 2019 – ideally 10 payments of £110 to spread the cost for families – 1st February to 1st November is 10 payments.

Families may choose not to pay in regular amounts, in which case £550 must be paid by the end of June 2019, and the full amount of £1100 must be paid by 1st November 2019. Families who do not use ParentPay should pay by cheque (Dollar Academy) or by bank transfer after contacting the Bursar's Office for account details.