

Important Pre-Booking Information



Sutton Community Academy Everest Base Camp

Destination: Nepal
April 2023



Dear parent or guardian,

Sutton Community Academy - Nepal: Everest Base Camp

Your son or daughter has the opportunity to take part in an adventurous school trip that we are helping your school to plan.

Adventure travel is exciting. It is a chance for young people to stretch their horizons and develop an understanding of cultures and destinations beyond our everyday world. It is an opportunity to build their self-confidence and understand more about the amazing world we live in. The educational benefits and opportunities for personal development are many indeed.

Here at STC Expeditions, we firmly believe our educational journeys and school expeditions are packed to bursting point with experiences that will change your child's view on the world. Some companies in our market like to use the phrase "a once in a lifetime trip" – we prefer to think that our trips will be the first of many incredible adventures your son or daughter will embark on throughout their lives. If we can inspire young people to travel, to explore and to celebrate the diversity and difference that exists across the planet, then we know we're doing something good.

By its very nature, however, adventure travel is more challenging and demanding than a conventional school trip. The enjoyment, excitement and educational benefit is derived, in part, from the inherent risks and challenges associated with each journey and destination. The following Parents' **Pre-booking Information Pack** is designed to enable you to make an informed decision as to the itinerary and organisations involved, and whether the trip is right for your child.

Please read it carefully and should you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



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Director



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About STC Expeditions

STC Expeditions, previously known as the School Travel Consultancy, has been organising adventurous school trips and expeditions since 2006. Over the years we have helped school groups summit 6000m peaks in the Himalaya and visit remote tribes deep in the rainforest clad interior of Venezuela. Not all the trips we arrange are as adventurous as these, yet wherever we operate our key goal is to provide an exceptional educational travel experience, one that takes students out of their comfort zones, opening their eyes and stretching their global horizons in a carefully risk-assessed environment.

Objectives

- J You would like to arrange an aspirational expedition to take young people high into the Himalaya. Reaching Everest Basecamp should be seen as a bonus, rather than the overall goal of the expedition, as there is still so much to gain from the trekking experience, even if the group do not reach basecamp itself.
- J In addition to the above, you would like to make full use of the opportunities your destination provides, so would like a diverse itinerary that shows all aspects of your destination – the geography, biology, language, history and culture.



Trip Overview

First made famous when Sir Edmund Hilary and Tensing Norgay made their successful summit in 1953, the iconic Everest Base Camp trek has since become one of the world's classic treks. Trekking on the 'rooftop of the world' will make for an unforgettable experience with awesome views of the world's highest and most beautiful mountains. Immerse yourself in the Sherpa way of life with a visit to the Sherpa museum, as well as a visit to the incredible Thyanboche monastery. With some time to relax and sightsee in

Nepal's bustling capital city, Kathmandu, this will be an experience of a lifetime that will stretch the horizons of even the most seasoned adventurer.

Trip Dates

The trip is planned for April 2023. Flights can only be booked a maximum of 11 months prior to departure, so we will be in contact once your travel dates are available to book.

Planned Itinerary

Below is an outline of the planned itinerary. Please note, it is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. Whilst every effort will be made to follow the schedule below, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or environmental factors, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides – he or she will want you to see their country in a good light.

Days 1 - 2: Fly from the UK to Nepal, overnight flight, Arrive Kathmandu (1356m)

On arrival at the Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport, we will be met and welcomed by a guide from the STC. A short drive brings us in to Kathmandu – the capital city of Nepal. With its maze of narrow streets, wooden temples and beautifully decorated palaces, it truly has the air of a medieval city. In the evening we enjoy a welcome dinner at a traditional Nepalese Restaurant.
Meals: LD

Day 3: Fly to Lukla (2840m) & trek to Phakding (2652m) – 3 hours walking

This morning we will be collected from our hotel and transferred to Kathmandu airport for a domestic flight to Lukla. Upon arrival, we are met by our trekking guide and porters. From Lukla we descend on a wide trail northwest to the village of Choblung in the Dudh Kosi Valley. The valley radiates energy

through beautiful pine and rhododendron forests. The walking is easy and we follow the river's course, passing through the village of Ghat. Our final destination for today's walk is the small village of Phakding where we overnight.
Meals: BLD

Day 4: Trek to Namche Bazaar (3440m) – 6 hours walking

Walking through a beautiful pine forest, the track leads along the Dudh Koshi River over many suspension bridges, one of which is the famous 'Hillary Suspension Bridge'. We will catch the wonderful prospect of the glistening Mt. Thamserku (6618m), before arriving at the settlements of Benkar, Chumoa and Monjo and then onto the check point and entrance to Sagarmatha National Park. We then pass through the last village of Jorsale before reaching Namche Bazaar.
Meals: BLD

Day 5: Namche Bazaar (3440m) – acclimatisation day

Namche Bazaar is a highly important village for the Sherpa people. In the morning we visit the Sherpa Museum and Visitor Centre. This contains an interesting display on Sherpa life and culture, lots of information on the forests, wildlife and plants of the area and an exhibit on the history of climbing in the Khumbu. The afternoon is free to walk up to the valley beyond Namche towards the village of Thamo. Alternatively, we can relax in the village.
Meals: BLD

Day 6: Trek from Namche to Tengboche (3870m) – 6 hours walking

We ascend out of the village and follow a high, fairly level path above the Dudh Kosi enjoying spectacular mountain views of Everest, Nuptse and Lhotse as we go. We pass the various 'shops' set up by Tibetans selling trinkets and then descend through forests of blue pine to cross the Dudh Kosi again at Phunki (3250m). On arrival at the Thyangboche Monastery (3867m), we will enjoy yet more incredible views of Everest and the surrounding peaks. We stop here for the night.

Meals: BLD

Day 7: Trek from Tengboche to Dingboche (4410m) – 5 hours walking

We start our trek today by descending through Rhododendron forests to the Imja Khola. We then pass over the bridge on the Imja Khola and by a long Mani stone wall, before entering the village of Pangboche. Our route continues through summer pastures to Dingboche.

Meals: BLD

Day 8: Dingboche (4410m) – acclimatisation day

There will be some breathtaking views of the North face of Ama Dablam and the Lhotse-Nuptse ridge as we explore this beautiful valley to Chukung (4730 m). From here, we can enjoy the panoramic view of Ama Dablam, Makalu, Tawoche, Lhotse, Nuptse, Island peak and others. The walking on this leg will take about five hours.

Meals: BLD

Day 9: Trek from Dingboche to Lobuche (4930m) – 6 hours walking

We are now well above the tree line and our walking today brings us to Dusa from where we descend to a stream at 4580m. Immediately above, we reach the teahouse of Dughla and continue to a ridge, which has several memorials to Sherpas killed on expeditions to Everest. We will continue along the moraine of the Khumbu Glacier, with views of Kala Pattar and Pumori before reaching Lobuche (4930m).

Meals: BLD

Day 10: Trek from Lobuche to Gorakshep (5180m) & a day trip to Everest Base Camp (5364m) – 8 hours walking

A very long, hard day today as we leave very early, following the Khumbu Glacier northwards to Gorakshep (5,180m) (about 3 hours walking). After a rest and a snack, we trek across the sandy flat at Gorakshep and climb onto the lateral moraine of the Khumbu glacier. The trail winds up and down to the area known as Everest Base Camp, from where we get fantastic close up views of the Khumbu Ice Fall. Nuptse towers above us and Pumori rears up behind us. We then retrace our steps to Gorakshep for our overnight stop.

Meals: BLD

Day 11: Kala Pattar (5545m) & descent to Pheriche (4280m) – 8 hours walking

Today is considered to be the climax of our trip. We start early in the morning to catch the dramatic views from Kala

Patthar. The first light of day shining on Mount Everest will take your breath away.

As we make our ascent, the familiar peaks of Lingtren, Khumbutse and Changtse tower to the east as Everest begins to reveal itself emerging between the west shoulder crest and Nuptse. After several hours of ascent, we reach Kala Patthar from where we scramble to climb the rocky outcrop near to the summit marked by cairns and prayer flags. We return to Gorakshep for breakfast and retrace our steps to Lobuche for lunch and then continue on down the valley to the lower altitude of Pheriche for our overnight stay.

Meals: BLD

Day 12: Pheriche to Tengboche (3860m) – 5 hours walking

After the previous days' tiring ascent to Kala Patthar, today is an easier walk down to the lower altitudes of Orsho and Shomare and Pangboche, from where we retrace our footsteps down to the Imja Khola and up through the forest to Debuche, or we could visit the nuns at the Debuche monastery, before finally reaching Tengboche.

Meals: BLD

Day 13: Trek from Tengboche to Monjo (2840m) – 7 hours walking

Crossing on yet another suspension bridge, we climb up the opposite side of the valley to reach the contouring path leading back through the Namche Bazaar. A steep descent down Namche Hill leads to the suspension bridge crossing the Dudh Kosi River and the small village of Monjo.

Meals: BLD

Day 14: Trek from Monjo to Lukla (2840m) – 5-6 hours walking

Retracing our steps along the east bank of the Dudh Kosi we make our final descent to Lukla, arriving sometime in the middle of the afternoon, affording ample time to relax and enjoy the feeling of a job well done. Lukla itself is a thriving community that is an eclectic mix of Sherpas, trekkers and soldiers and makes for a fascinating place to explore at the end of the trek.

Meals: BLD

Days 15 - 16: Fly from Lukla to Kathmandu (with spare day in case of flight cancellation)

In the early morning we will take off from the Lukla airstrip for a spectacular mountain flight back to Kathmandu (weather permitting). Upon arrival at the Kathmandu domestic airport terminal,

we transfer to our hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore this wonderful city; you can either shop for souvenirs, try out the various restaurants in Thamel or simply relax. There is a sightseeing tour of Durbar Square, where many of Kathmandu's most historic and important temples are located. We also visit the Swayambhunath Temple (also known as the Monkey Temple) and the world's most glorious Buddhist Chaityas built 2000 years ago situated on a hillock about 77 m above the Kathmandu valley. We have the chance to drive to Patan - a beautiful city in its own right which rivalled Kathmandu in terms of the splendor of its temples and squares and is now better preserved, less polluted and less crowded. Lastly we bid farewell to the mountains as our journey to Nepal comes to an end and we return home.

Meals: BLD

Day 17: Depart Kathmandu, fly to London

This morning, after our amazing Himalayan adventure, we leave Nepal and fly back to the UK, returning the same day.

Meals: B



Adventure Grading

We grade all our trips so teachers, school leaders, students and parents can gauge whether it is appropriate to their requirements and objectives. We have given this trip the following grading:

Physical: Grade 5: A high level of fitness is required to participate on a trip of this level. We recommend previous multi-day trekking experience at this level, either in the UK or internationally. You need complete confidence in your ability to trek for multiple days over difficult terrain and cope with significant variations in temperatures throughout

the tour. Altitude could be higher than 4,500m but good acclimatisation will be built into the programme. Longer periods of trekking could be of a sustained nature, but rest days will be planned. A pre-travel fitness programme of four to six months is essential to ensure you are in optimal fitness to make the most of this trip.

Culture Shock: Grade 4: Students joining trips at this level will find the comforts of home are more of a rarity – or viewed another way, a welcome luxury. English is unlikely to be widely spoken and the food will be quite different to home, perhaps for extended sections of the trip. You should observe local customs so not to cause offence. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty and accommodation in some locations is likely to be basic. Whilst a challenge, destinations and trips at cultural level 4 are also a fantastic opportunity to see a very different part of the world.

Minimum Age

We recommend a minimum age of 16 years for this trip.

Meals

The majority of meals are included on our trips. Breakfasts, Lunches and Dinners for each day are shown as a BLD code on each day above. Please note the exact meal inclusions may change slightly on the first/last days depending on flight departure/arrival times.

Reality Check / Expectations

Ok, so you want to go on an adventure to Nepal? What does this *actually* involve? What expectations should you have? It's very difficult for us to give an accurate description in advance of what you will experience on this trip. That is, after all, the whole reason why we run these trips – some things you can only understand when you experience them in person, outside of the classroom, immersed in another culture. Below we give a few home truths about your trip. Some of them may sound 'harsh', but we want you to be fully informed and remember, a little discomfort here and there is a small price to pay to experience the amazing opportunities available on this adventure. Standards of accommodation, transport, service provision, healthcare, hygiene and emergency response are, generally, not as high as in the UK. Flexibility and patience on the part of the traveller is important, so too is your understanding

of this as a parent or guardian.



Accommodation

Accommodation standards on our adventures vary from country to country. Don't expect to turn up to towels folded into swans and a neat triangle fold at the end of your toilet roll. Sometimes we have quite good accommodation. Sometimes shared rooming is exactly what it means, you could be sharing cramped rooms in bunkbeds. You could be travelling on an overnight train where the 'walls' are curtains. At the lower end of accommodation, your bed may just be a mattress on the floor in a basic guesthouse or a hammock in the jungle. Washing facilities may be basic with limited showers and squat toilets. It all adds to the experience though, and is part and parcel of travelling in low income countries.

Accommodation types used on this trip include those below (please note the trek maybe done using simple guesthouses called 'teahouses', or by camping. This is a decision we will come to in collaboration with the Academy:

Overnight Flight: We use good quality airlines for our international flights. Most, if not all, have in-seat entertainment and good food / refreshments.

Hotel: Standards of hotels used vary from country to country and place to place. Most hotels rooms are twins or triples and usually en-suite but don't expect your towels to be folded into swans or for there to be a neat triangle fold at the end of your toilet roll. We try and choose hotels that are safe, locally owned and run, have character and are well located for accessing the planned sites and activities.

Simple Hotel / Guest House ('teahouses'): You should expect simple but clean rooms, sometimes en-suite, but some will have shared facilities. Rooms will often hold two to four beds, occasionally more. Guest houses are often less formal than hotels but that often comes with more character, a welcoming host family and/or unique features.

Wild Camp with Limited Facilities: On a wild camp you should expect very basic limited facilities. You'll be sleeping in tents or, if in a jungle environment, possibly a hammock. If the weather is good, then there may be the opportunity to sleep out in the open. The toilet is likely to be a hole in the ground, covered by a toilet 'tent'. Showers are unlikely, but you may be given a bowl of warm water in the morning to wash. What you lose in comfort is usually more than made up for by the spectacular surroundings and amazing hospitality of our camp staff.

Environment & Place

The environment can be the biggest challenge on an expedition. The locals are used to it, but to you it will be an alien environment and you will have to learn to adapt. This may be a struggle initially, and be uncomfortable for a few days, but give it time and you'll soon get used to it. Learn to look through any initial discomfort and look around at where you are and what you're experiencing. The environments you'll encounter on this trip include:

Jungle / Rainforest: Without a doubt, the toughest environment that the world has to offer. Hot, wet, full of bugs, pitch black at night and often very noisy. Yes, there will probably be leeches (not a problem, our guides will show how to remove them safely). You are likely to get dirty, wet and sweaty. You will have to make sure your kit is prepared, waterproofed and you can look after your feet. Personal administration is paramount, but the rewards are incredible: it's an amazing, beautiful, mesmerizing place

Mountains: Mountains have their own weather systems so be prepared to experience heat, cold, rain, wind and sun – sometimes all on the same day! If at altitude (2,500-3000m+) you may feel slight effects of altitude with headaches and not sleeping well until you have fully acclimatised. All our itineraries allow for good acclimatisation. Our guides are

very experienced and will be looking out for you.

Cold / Arctic: As you might expect, parts of this trip have the potential to be cold. Perhaps very cold! That said, the cold here is generally 'dry' which is easier to manage. You will need to be on top of your personal administration - know where your kit is packed within your bags and always have some sort of clothing layer on, especially on your hands. Make sure you follow the kit list ensuring you have enough warm layers and warm boots. The most important thing is to look after each other and listen to your STC Leader's advice who will be an expert in the local environment.

Poverty: Poverty in the UK is very much in existence, but it's usually masked by clean streets, good infrastructure and a temperate climate. When you visit many of our destinations poverty has a completely different look and feel: discarded rubbish, animal (or human) waste, stagnant water, poorly maintained roads and pavements and basic housing. Add in barefooted children in often dirty clothes and you will soon understand what we mean. Experiencing this can be unpleasant as you would never wish this upon anyone, but we live in the real world and sometimes the real world isn't pretty. Our trips are designed to open your eyes to all aspects of your destination.

Modes of Travel

Transport on this trip will be by:

Bus / Coach: We use good quality, privately owned buses. We do not use public buses. All buses have seat belts and been safety checked to at least minimum local standards, if not western standards. All drivers are known to and trusted by our local partners in country and have their driving hours limited in line with EU rules.

Trekking: This mode of transport is as old as time and is tried and tested to ensure you can absorb all the environment has to offer! Your feet, legs and back/shoulders may get sore so it's important to look after them (and get fit before you start!) There's no getting away from it, walking uphill can be uncomfortable, no matter how fit you are, so expect to be out of breath at some point. At times it might be challenging, but all our treks are achievable by people just like you, so

supporting each other in the team is crucial. The best thing? Trekking can take you to amazing, remote locations that buses, trucks and bikes simply can't. Yes, it requires effort but the rewards are great but you will have earned the feeling of accomplishment afterwards. A great bonus is that often you're away from light pollution and the stars will be utterly fantastic! You won't need to trek with a full backpack, just a day sack of around 25/30 litres.

Internal flight: Internal flights and the airlines used will vary depending on your destination. However, they are always reliable, good quality airlines with good safety records. In some places, internal flights can be on planes that are much smaller than you might be used to if flying around Europe, but they're a great way to ensure we avoid hours and hours in a bus!

Trip Cost and Group Size

Our price to the school for this trip varies from **£3,485.00 to £3,585 per person** depending on group size and whether the group camp or use teahouses on the trek.

We aim for our tours and expeditions to be essentially fully inclusive. There are, however, some things we can't include in our price to the school – please see the 'What's not included' section below.

We price our trips based on different group sizes and price 'breaks'. The above price is subject to a minimum of 15 paying participants to make the trip viable at the highest price.

What's included?

The following is included in the price to the school:

-) All accommodation, activities, entrance fees and transportation as per itinerary, unless marked 'optional'.
-) Meals as described in the day to day itinerary
-) International airfares and pre-paying taxes
-) Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC Tour/Expedition Leader whilst in Nepal with further local guides at sites as required
-) Pre-travel training programme as detailed
-) ATOL financial protection

-) Cancellation, Medical Emergency and Repatriation Travel Insurance (see below)
-) Group First Aid Kit & Medications Pack
-) 24-hour emergency response and management
-) All pre-departure services including BS8848 safety management, risk assessments, planning fees (£200pp) and final travel documentation.
-) Carbon Mitigation of flights for the whole group.



What's not included?

We aim for our tours and expeditions to be essentially fully inclusive. There are, however, some things we can't include in our price.

Our price to the school does not include the following, which the school may have added an additional fee for:

-) Transport to airport in UK
-) Drinking water & soft drinks (we discourage the use of single-use plastic water bottles and will be giving advice on filter bottles and the purification of water)
-) Visas if required (see country information for more details)
-) Any required inoculations
-) Personal spending money – to cover souvenirs, postage, snacks, drinks, optional activities/entrance fees
-) Airport departure taxes to be paid locally (if required)
-) Tips for guides, drivers and support staff: (we suggest allowing £100 per person for this trip.

Country Information

Full Country Name: The Kingdom of Nepal

Area: Approx. 147,000 sq. km

Population: 28.98 million (2016)

Capital City: Kathmandu

People: Seven major tribal groups, two caste groups, with Indians and some Tibetans also present.

Language(s): There are over one hundred languages spoken in Nepal, the official language is Nepali, which is derived from Sanskrit. It is spoken chiefly by Khas in the Indian state of Sikkim and in West Bengal's Darjeeling district.

Religion(s): Officially 90% Hindu, 8% Buddhist and 2% Islamic

Time: GMT+5hr 45 mins

Country overview:

Nepal is the very watershed of Asia. Squeezed between India and Tibet, it stretches from rich subtropical forests to soaring Himalayan peaks and from jungly tiger habitat to the precipitous hunting grounds of the snow leopard. Climbing the hillside of one valley alone you can be sweltering in the shade of a banana palm in the morning, and sheltering from a snowstorm in the afternoon.

Nepal's cultural landscape is every bit as diverse as its physical one. Its people belong to a host of distinctive ethnic groups, and speak a host of languages. They live in everything from dense, ancient cities erupting with pagoda-roofed Hindu temples to villages perched on dizzying sweeps of rice-farming terraces and dusty highland settlements clustered around tiny monasteries. Religious practices range from Indian-style Hinduism to Tibetan Buddhism and from nature-worship to shamanism.

Geography:

For a small country, Nepal has tremendous geographic diversity. It rises from as low as 59 metres (194 ft.) elevation in the tropical Terai—the northern rim of the Gangetic Plain, beyond the perpetual snow line to some 90 peaks over 7,000 metres (22,966 ft.) including Earth's highest 8,848 metres (29,029 ft.) Mount Everest or Sagarmatha. In addition to the continuum from tropical warmth to cold comparable to polar regions, average annual precipitation varies from as little as 160 millimetres in the rainshadow

north of the Himalaya to as much as 5,500 millimetres on windward slopes. Along a south-to-north transect, Nepal can be divided into three belts: Terai, Hill and Mountain Regions. In the other direction it is divided into three major river systems, from east to west: Koshi, Gandaki/Narayani and Karnali (including the Mahakali/Sarda along the western border), all tributaries of the Ganges. The Ganges-Yarlung Zangbo / Brahmaputra watershed largely coincides with the Nepal-Tibet border; however, several Ganges tributaries rise inside Tibet.

Climate:

Nepal's climate essentially follows our own in autumn, winter and spring. However, the summer months of May to September are dominated by the monsoon that heads north from India. During this time of heavy rainfall, the rivers become swollen and the trails muddy and leech infested. An exception to this is the Kingdom of Mustang which lies north of the Annapurna region and is geographically part of the Tibetan plateau. Here, May and September are considered the best months to travel. Elsewhere, the best times of year to visit Nepal are October and November, or March and April. February is a good time on the lower trekking routes when the high trails remain impassable.

For more detailed information on Nepal's climate, please visit the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) website on following link: <http://worldweather.wmo.int/en/country.html?countryCode=NPL>

Cultural considerations:

Of course, being in a totally different culture, you can expect to make some mistakes and most of the locals will make allowances for this. It is, however appreciated when visitors make a genuine effort to observe local customs. When it comes to traveling in Nepal, some specific advice includes:

- Nudity is totally unacceptable, so please wear a swimsuit or sarong when bathing.
- Overt public displays of affection are discouraged.
- When entering any Nepalese home, monastery or temple, always remove your shoes.

- It is extremely offensive to throw rubbish into any cooking fire.

- For religious reasons, Nepalese people are offended by being touched on the head and similarly, never direct the soles of your feet at a person or a religious shrine.

- Many Hindu temples may not be open to non-Hindus. Always ask permission before entering.

- Women and men should not wear high cut or tight-fitting shorts. Vest tops that expose the shoulders are similarly unacceptable. Long, baggy shorts are acceptable for both men and women. For more information see <http://www.guide.culturecrossing.net> for more information.

Regulations: Red Tape:

A full passport (valid for six months after your return date) is required for visits to Nepal. British citizens require a visa which can be acquired on arrival at Kathmandu airport. You will be required to fill in a form, submit 2 passport size photos and pay US\$30 in cash for a 15-day visa or US\$50 for a 30 day visa. Nationals of all other countries should contact their local embassy or consulate. Information can also be found at <http://www.travcour.com>. This information is given in good faith, but may be subject to change without warning.

Foreign Office Advice:

You should familiarise yourself with up-to-date Foreign Office advice for travel to Nepal. This is available on their website: <http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nepal> and contains useful information regarding safety and security, health and entry requirements.

Health & Vaccine Information:

Shortly after booking, all our groups receive a trip specific health and vaccination briefing letter from our medical advisor. If you want to look up the latest health advice and recommended vaccinations for your destination prior to booking, please visit the TravelHealthPro country specific website on the following link: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/159/nepal>

Venture Provider

STC Expeditions is the venture provider for this trip (as defined in British Standard BS8848), holding overall responsibility for safety and operations.

Leader Team

The Leader team for this expedition will be made up of:

STC Leader: An experienced tour/expedition leader will accompany the group when in country. By using leaders from your destination, we ensure our clients get the best possible in-country experience. Students and teachers regularly tell us that our leaders are a vital part of the success of our trips, providing an invaluable insight into local customs, history, flora, fauna, geography, politics and much more. They also have detailed knowledge of the local environmental and safety issues that groups could potentially incur and are thoroughly trained by us in their responsibilities and emergency procedures. The STC Leader has overall responsibility for directing the logistics of the trip and ensuring the safety of each and every person participating.

As a minimum requirement, all STC Leaders must:

-)] Be over 25 years of age
-)] Have at least three years' experience leading relevant trips in the destination
-)] Have suitable professional qualifications (e.g. mountain guide qualifications, tour leader certificates), as applicable to the trip.
-)] Hold an in-date, appropriate first aid certificate.
-)] Have clear police/background checks and references to the fullest extent available in the destination.
-)] Have attended an STC Leader training day and been selected by STC UK staff as being appropriate to work with our groups.

School Leader Team: This is made up of a minimum of two teachers, one of each gender (if a mixed group). The school leader team support the STC Leader in aspects of pastoral care issues of participants and the implementation of school policies and appropriate guidelines.

Pre-departure information

In the build up to your trip, we will be providing detailed information and training sessions to enable participants to plan and prepare as thoroughly as possible for this trip. This information will include advice on:

-)] Confirmed travel arrangements
-)] Health & hygiene advice
-)] A comprehensive kit list
-)] Culture & history of your destination
-)] Sources of further information about your destination
-)] Passport and visa requirements
-)] Trip specific vaccination and medical advice from Travel Health Consultancy Ltd.
-)] Money matters including, if appropriate to your trip, fundraising ideas and entrepreneurial schemes
-)] Language – basic phrases
-)] Expected fitness requirements (a training programme will be available on your booking page)
-)] Roles, responsibilities and expectations of participants
-)] Responsible tourism advice and suggestions
-)] Code of conduct
-)] What to do in an emergency and emergency contact information

Pre-travel meetings/training

Preparing students for their upcoming adventure is a vital part of safety management and an opportunity to teach important life skills. The training given to students prior to this adventure is made up of the following:

Fundraising and destination planning (Expedition Training 1):

This approximately 2-hour session includes group discussion, debate and advice sessions on how to raise the expedition funds and also research the destination. This usually takes place 1 – 2 months after launch and covers:

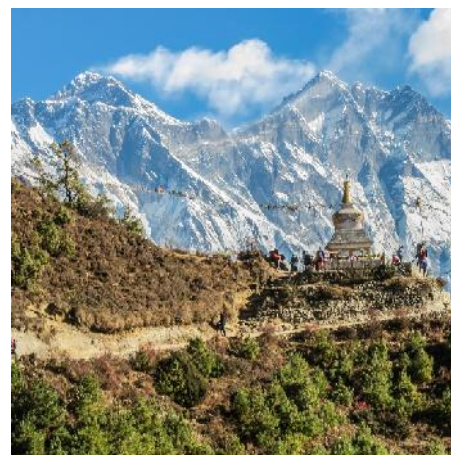
-)] Destination & culture research – sources of information to help you get the most from your expedition experience.
-)] Team building games
-)] Fundraising & event planning – as a team and individually

Responsible Tourism workshop, Safety management and kit (Expedition Training 2): This afternoon / evening totals about three hours, usually arranged four to six months prior to your departure. First, an ethical tourism workshop looks at the subject of responsible tourism, ethical dilemmas whilst travelling and how to have a positive impact abroad. Topics include:

-)] Water usage
-)] Cultural considerations
-)] Ethical volunteering
-)] Positive and negative impacts of travel

The second half of the session covers the following elements and is ideal to combine with parental information sessions on kit, packing and safety briefings. We usually invite the parents to the last hour of this training session to help understand and feel comfortable with all the final information prior to departure of the trip. Topics covered include:

-)] Group safety
-)] Roles & responsibilities
-)] Personal safety training
-)] Health & hygiene training
-)] Kit & how to pack
-)] Crisis and Communications



How to book

To confirm your place on this adventure, you need to do the following:

1) Complete an STC Expeditions online booking form:

This collects personal contact details, next of kin, passport and medical information. If under 18 years of age, this form **MUST** be signed by a parent or guardian **AND** the student travelling. It is important that the booking form is completed in a prompt timeframe to enable our medical advisor to give initial clearance for all participants wanting to join the trip. Should we have any questions regarding medical conditions, we will contact the parent/guardian for more information.

To complete our booking form, go to www.thestc.co.uk, click on "Login" and then "Create an account". Follow the instructions on screen to set up your user account. **[Please make a note of the username/email used – see below]** Then, when prompted to enter a booking reference, use the following code: **2023-sutton-academy-nepal**

Your username: The username/email (and associated password) used to set up your account above provides on-going access to our portal. You will need this to log back into our system at various points in the build up to your trip. You will be able to view any trip documentation online (e.g. kit lists and pre-departure information) in the run up to departure. In addition, should any of your personal details change (e.g. a passport needs renewing or you need to update your medical information) you can log back in and change the details on our secure site.

****** The deadline for completing our booking form is: 14/01/2022 ******

If we do not receive your completed application form by this date a late booking fee of £50 may be applied due to additional administration work on our behalf.

2) Pay a deposit to school:

The deposit for this trip is: £400.00 per person. Please refer to the letter from school for details of this. Deposits should be payable to the school please, **NOT** to STC Expeditions.

Safety & Attitude to Risk

Safety is our number priority and we take the welfare of our clients and those who work on our trips extremely seriously. We have comprehensive safety management systems in place, including areas detailed below. If you would like to know more, please ask for a copy of our Safety Management System.

British Standard 8848:2014: All trips and expeditions provided by STC Expeditions conform to British Standard 8848:2014 (a specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom) as declared by The Young Explorers' Trust on the basis of the operating procedures and safety management systems evidenced on 20th January 2020 and a sample of ventures examined to the year-end 2019.

Trip selection: Each journey and expedition has been tailor-made and researched with school groups in mind.

Leaders: Each trip is accompanied by a full time professional leader, trained in first aid, critical incident management and the complex art of managing logistics.

Risk Assessment: Country and itinerary specific risk assessments are provided prior to departure. In addition, your leader has the training to dynamically risk assess your journey when on the road. Group management risk assessments are provided to assist lead teachers. Copies of risk assessments are available to all stakeholders and can be obtained by contacting STC Expeditions on 01392 660056.

Water activities: On all our trips there may be opportunities to swim and whilst we cannot guarantee that there will be lifeguards on duty in all locations, any swimming or water activity is covered under our safety management system. Swimming capability of each participant is asked on our booking form and specific permission sort from parents/guardians as to whether participants are allowed to swim in certain locations (e.g. swimming in inland lakes and rivers, the sea, swimming pools).

Third Party Providers: On all our trips and expeditions, we use one or more third party providers in your destination

to deliver certain services, including accommodation, transport and specialist activities such as trekking and white-water rafting (if applicable to your trip). All these providers are pre-checked by us in line with our Safety Management System and Standard Operating Procedures.

Crisis response: 24-hour emergency back-up and critical incident support is on hand in the unlikely event of an incident whilst overseas.

Communication: Each group carries satellite, radio and/or mobile communications as your itinerary and terrain demands, ensuring communication is possible in all situations.

Accommodation & transport: All accommodation and transport are risk assessed and checked by local operations teams. Minimum requirements for vehicle standards and driver hours are enforced through contractual agreements with our in-country partners.

Insurance: £5,000,000 public liability insurance is in place and personal travel insurance covering medical treatment and emergency repatriation is included for all those travelling.

Pre-travel screening: All travellers are medically screened by our independent medical advisor to ensure they are fit and healthy to undertake your chosen journey.

Travel Advice: All tours and expeditions are run within The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice. FCDO advice is monitored daily and tour operators have the resources to react quickly should that advice change.

Pre-trip training: Students and staff are given the necessary training and skills to safely undertake each journey. Some of this training is provided by us, some by external companies as necessary.

Evacuation: We have an emergency evacuation plan in place for each day of the trip, detailing the nearest medical facilities and places of assistance. Whilst helicopter evacuation is theoretically possible in Nepal, in reality it is often quicker to evacuate casualties by minibus or ambulance. The estimated evacuation time from the most remote point on this trip to a good standard hospital may be in the region of 6 hours

or longer, as the actual evacuation time may be affected by outside factors such as: weather, daylight hours, severity of incident, groups fitness levels, resources available and ground conditions. If you would like to see a copy of our emergency evacuation plan then please get in touch.

Altitude and acclimatisation: This trip goes to high altitude (max 5545m). We plan our ascent profiles for our treks very carefully to ensure they remain within internationally approved guidelines for acclimatisation. Our tour/expedition leaders are also extremely experienced in spotting and dealing with altitude related issues. Should you have any questions about altitude issues then please don't hesitate to get in touch. Our independent medical advisor will, in due course, advise whether students would benefit from the use of Diamox, a drug which aids acclimatisation, on this itinerary.

Declaration of Risk: Ventures that include adventurous activities involve exposure to accepted elements of risk, challenge and adventure greater than those normally encountered in everyday life. Whilst such activities provided by STC Expeditions are subject to exacting safety management processes, it cannot be guaranteed that all possibility of resultant injury to participants, or others, is eliminated.



Travel Insurance

We have arranged specialist group medical travel insurance for all our clients. This includes cover for all activities featured as part of your trip as well as cancellation (including Covid related reasons) prior to departure. Full details of cover and conditions will be in the Policy Document, available upon request approximately one month before departure. The example cover and limits shown below apply to each Insured Person. This policy is primarily to cover cancellations and emergencies overseas. It does NOT include cover for personal possessions – it is an individual's responsibility to insure possessions when travelling with us, if required.

Overview of Sums Insured

Cancellation: Up to Value of Trip with an excess of £75.

24 hr Emergency Medical,

Repatriation: Up to £10,000,000 with an excess of £75*

Personal Liability: Up to £2,000,000

Personal Accident: Up to £25,000

For more details and/or a full copy of the policy, please get in touch.

Please Note: Any medical expenses incurred overseas if travelling against medical advice, or to obtain medical treatment, or after a terminal prognosis has been made will be excluded from cover whilst travelling overseas. Any medical expenses not verified by a medical report are also excluded.

**for Nepal, the excess is the first £500 of each and every helicopter repatriation.*

Responsible Tourism

We are the leading UK expedition company in responsible travel and the only to be Travelife and Child Safe Certified. Our ethos is to educate the next generation of responsible world travellers. You can rest assured any adventure planned with us will be sustainable and ethical.



Here are just a few examples which prove we practice what we preach:

- J Carbon mitigation of all flights by donating to the charity Friends of Conservation
- J We partner with Scottish rewilding charity Trees for Life www.treesforlife.org.uk and have committed to plant a tree for every person that travels with us.
- J Pledged to Travellers Against Plastic
- J Eco Car Club for staff travel
- J Employing and training tour/expedition leaders from your destination
- J Responsible tourism training to in country staff and within UK schools to students and teachers alike
- J Policy against elephant riding and other unethical wildlife activities
- J Fairtrade farm visits in our itineraries and use of Fairtrade coffee and tea in the office
- J Culturally sensitive itineraries and Women's Perspective opportunities
- J Global Environmental Clean Up project for groups to improve polluted coastal or inland areas in their destination

Payment Plan

In line with our Booking Conditions, the following is our standard payment plan for most trips, but please refer to the school letter detailing the specific costs and payment schedule for this particular trip.

- J 30% of the trip costs are to be paid by 360 days prior to departure.
- J 50% of the trip costs are to be paid by 180 days prior to departure.
- J 80% of the trip costs are to be paid by 120 days prior to departure.
- J 100% of the trip costs are to be paid by 75 days prior to departure.

Financial Protection

All the flight inclusive tours and expeditions offered by STC Expeditions are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. Our ATOL license number is 11054. On booking, the school will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for



more information about financial protection and the CAA website for more details on the ATOL Certificate: <https://www.caa.co.uk/ATOL-protection/Consumers/About-ATOL/>

Paying your Way

We strongly believe that students need their parents' permission to go on these adventures – but not necessarily their money! Students can consider paying their own way towards the trip and will find advice in our 'Stashing the Cash' fundraising guide on the online portal. In our experience, students come up with the best and most entrepreneurial ideas which look great on their CV or potential university applications. Examples could include getting a Saturday job, babysitting or tutoring.

Booking Conditions

By booking a place on the trip, you confirm that you accept our booking conditions which can be found on our website at the following address: <https://www.thestc.co.uk/assets/uploads/general/The-STC-Group-Terms-and-Conditions-v7.pdf>

Privacy & Data Collection

As part of a booking, we need to collect a variety of personal details, including sensitive personal information, in order to fulfil our obligations as a tour operator and to ensure the safety of all participants. We have comprehensive data security procedures in place and process data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). We will not sell, distribute or lease your personal information to third parties unless we are required by law to do so. For more details on how we process data, please visit our website: <https://www.thestc.co.uk/privacy/>

Relationship with the School

When we run an overseas trip for a school we contract with the school for the delivery of the travel arrangements and any pre-trip programme. We also contract directly with the parents/guardians through our terms and conditions which govern responsibilities of both parties, cancellation policies, changes and liability. Therefore, in terms of health and safety, we work in partnership with the school's Senior Management and/or

Head Teacher. This means that we also work with the school's Operating Authority, (if applicable) meaning the trip is signed off by an external body.

How to contact us

We love to talk travel. If you have any questions about this information or want to know more about us as a company then you can find us here:

STC Expeditions
Unit 6B, King St Business Centre
Exeter
EX1 1BH

Or telephone via: 01392 660056
For email: schools@thestc.co.uk
And Web: www.thestc.co.uk

Nepal

