



Flanders
State of the Art

P R E S S R E L E A S E

VISITFLANDERS creates a new incentive to attract UK and Ireland schools and colleges to return to Flanders Fields for overnight visits

The area of Flanders Fields, synonymous with its century old battle scars of World War 1, craters, memorials, and Allied and German cemeteries has long been accustomed to a steady flow of schools and colleges visiting the region, over the years. The Westhoek region of Flanders offers a landscape of rolling hills, charming villages and bustling cities and it is here that so many students first learn about the conflict of World War 1, in the place that the battles took place. However, over recent years, the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have made their mark on the communities visiting, as well as those in the Flanders Fields region. In addition, recent increases in the costs of travel against a wider backdrop of rises in the cost of living have created a huge impact on school travel. In recognition these financial restraints and the many challenges now faced by families, **VISITFLANDERS have launched the Welcome Back Discount**, a new incentive to help alleviate barriers to travel, ensuring that students can continue to visit the region maintaining support and re-igniting that connection between schoolchildren and students from the UK and Ireland. The incentive will apply to school operators, for group bookings of 30 children or more, visiting for two nights or more.

Its aim is to re-connect the communities of Flanders Fields and overseas students in the UK and Ireland whilst also offering a qualitative enhancement to their education and insight into First World War heritage. Because international school trips are often a student's first trip away from family, its effects can be profound. **VISITFLANDERS** recognises that a student trip to Flanders, to learn about the history of WW1, but also to positively experience a different culture, establishes a lifelong relationship with its region.

The '**Welcome Back Discount**' offers a raft of a range of free and discounted to many of the region's excellent museums and visitor attractions, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Bookings must include a minimum group size of 30 children;
- (2) Bookings include a minimum of 2 overnights at a recognised accommodation provider in Flanders;
- (3) Include full visits to at least 2 WW1 museums in the region;
- (4) Booking and invoiced by 31 December 2022, for travel by 31 March 2024.

In addition, a 10% reduction is applicable to the following elements booked in Flanders.Belgium:

- (1) Meals booked for the whole group at cafés and restaurants in the region (including those at museums and other visitor attractions);
- (2) Services of local guides;

- (3) 'Experiences' offered by WW1 museums that are priced separately to general group admission.

EXCLUSIONS to the 10% discount apply to:

- (1) Transport-related costs, including but not limited to ferry/Eurotunnel crossings, cost of coaches, cost of fuel, cost of drivers and road tolls;
- (2) Accommodation or meals booked in venues outside of Flanders;
- (3) Museum/visitor attraction admissions to non-WW1 museums or to museums located outside of Flanders.

-Ends-

26 October 2022

Notes to Editors:

To apply for the **WELCOME BACK DISCOUNT** schools must:

- Book a Flanders Fields school trip with a UK or Irish-based tour operator.
- Any trip must be compliant with the conditions outlined above.

The tour operator will be reimbursed with every Welcome Back Discount on all bookings invoiced by 31 December 2022. The Welcome Back Discount will be equal to 10% of the cost of the elements outlined above and incurred by the tour operator. The tour operator must:

- advertise/publicise (on any quote offered to schools, as well as on their website) that they are offering the Welcome Back Discount;
- give a 10% discount on published group rates (for museum entry, overnight accommodation, meals, etc.);
- provide **VISITFLANDERS** with a copy of the invoice to the school, showing the name of the school, details of the trip booked (including arrival date, group size, accommodation, museums etc.) and the amount of the discount given to the school;

Claims must be submitted to **VISITFLANDERS** to travetrade@visitflanders.com by 31 December 2022, including details of its international bank account (IBAN)

List of WW1 museums in Flanders Fields

Bayernwald, Heuvelland
Death Trench, Diksmuide
Guynemer Paviljoen, Langemark
Hooge Crater Museum, Zillebeke
In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres
Käthe Kolwitz Museum, Koekelare
Lange Max Museum, Koekelare
Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, Zonnebeke
Talbot House, Poperinge
Westfront, Nieuwpoort
Yser Tower, Diksmuide

About VISITFLANDERS

This Flemish government agency is the official tourist organisation for Flanders. The organisation strives for the sustainable development and promotion of tourism to and within Flanders, with a view to boosting the economic return, employment and the well-being of its inhabitants. www.visitflanders.com

For more information please contact :

VISITFLANDERS

Anita Rampall

anita.rampall@visitflanders.com

0207 299 3594