

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

International Sports Tour Visa Handling

Document Title	SOP: Visa Processing for High School Sports Tours
Organization	MAMS Sports Tours
Department	Administration & International Tours
Applicability	Tours to Australia, UK, Schengen Area, South Africa

1. OBJECTIVE

To establish a standardised, compliant, and efficient process for managing visa applications for MAMS Sports Tours student athletes and staff. This SOP ensures all travel documentation meets the strict regulatory requirements for **minors (under 18)** travelling internationally for amateur sports purposes from India, the Middle East, and other countries.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to:

- **Applicants:** Bona fide students of various schools, colleges and trainees of sports clubs and academies in India and other countries.
 - **Destinations:** Primarily Australia, United Kingdom, Schengen Zone (Europe), and South Africa.
 - **Origin:** Applications lodged from India, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other countries.
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3. VISA CATEGORY SELECTION

Selecting the correct visa subclass is critical to avoid refusals based on "intent." MAMS tours are classified as **amateur student tours**, not professional employment.

3.1 Australia

- **Target Visa: Visitor Visa (Subclass 600) – Tourist Stream.**
- **Justification:** This stream allows for participation in amateur sporting events where no payment/salary is received.
- **Note:** Do *not* apply for the *Temporary Activity (Subclass 408)* visa unless the tour is officially endorsed by the Australian Government or a "Peak Sporting Body" (e.g., Cricket Australia) inviting the team for a specific high-performance event. For standard school fixtures, Subclass 600 is correct.

3.2 United Kingdom

- **Target Visa: Standard Visitor Visa.**
- **Justification:** Allows stay for up to 6 months to "take part in a sports tournament or event as an amateur."
- **Warning:** Avoid the *International Sportsperson* visa, which requires a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) and is reserved for professionals making a living from the sport.

3.3 Schengen Area (e.g., France, Netherlands, Germany)

- **Target Visa: Short-Stay Visa (Type C).**
- **Purpose:** "Sports" or "Cultural."
- **Requirement:** A confirmed invitation from the hosting federation or club in Europe is mandatory.

3.4 South Africa

- **Target Visa: Visitor Visa.**
 - **Critical Constraint:** South Africa has the strictest regulations for traveling minors.
 - **Mandatory Requirement:** All minors must present an **Unabridged Birth Certificate (UBC)** detailing *both* parents' names, regardless of visa status.
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4. DOCUMENTATION PROTOCOLS

4.1 The "MAMS Tour Pack" (issued by MAMS)

For every tour, MAMS Admin must generate a master invitation pack containing:

1. **Travel Bookings:** Detailed itinerary, list of matches, accommodation details, transport (flights, coaches) bookings, and mandatory travel insurance coverage.
2. **Host Invitation:** Official invite from the overseas hosting school/academy/club.
3. **Cover Letter (Academy):** Stating the tour is fully supervised, amateur, and costs are covered by parents/academy.

4.2 Applicant Documents (Parent Responsibility)

Parents must provide the following standard documents. *Note: Digital scans must be high resolution.*

- **Passport:** Valid for at least 6 months beyond the *return* date, with a minimum of 2-3 blank pages.
- **Photographs:** Recent (under 3 months), white background, 35mm x 45mm (80% face coverage).
- **School NOC:** "No Objection Certificate" from the student's academic school (if different from MAMS) permitting leave.
- **Financial Proof:** Sponsorship Letter with Parents' bank statements (last 6 months), Income Tax Returns (last 3 years), GST Copy or employment proof, and sufficient investments to prove home ties and funding. Firm / Company ITRs add further weightage to provide for home ties and funding.

4.3 Special Protocol: Minor Safety & Consent

This is the highest risk area for border control refusals.

- **Consent Affidavit:** A notarised affidavit signed by **BOTH** parents authorising the student to travel with the appointed MAMS Tour Manager.
 - *If parents are separated/divorced:* Court orders granting custody must be attached.
 - *If one parent is deceased:* Death certificate must be attached.
- **Birth Certificate:** A copy of the birth certificate showing both parents' names (Original required for South Africa).

Student Document Checklist

Parents are required to arrange the following documents for the student's visa application:

1. Original Passport – New & Old

- Original current passport and previous passport(s), if available.
- Passport should be valid for **at least 6 months beyond the intended date of departure from the UK.**
- Should contain **at least 2 blank visa pages.**
- Data pages should be free from any alterations or handwritten amendments.

2. Student's Birth Certificate

- **Notarised copy** of the student's birth certificate in **English.**

3. School ID Card

- Copy of the student's current school identity card.

4. Sponsorship Letter

- Sponsorship letter from the parent(s)/legal guardian confirming that they will financially support the student's trip. (Format to be provided by MAMS Sports Tours)

5. Proof of Sufficient Funds

- Parent/guardian's **last 6 months' bank statements.**
- Bank statements should be **recent and dated within 1 week of the visa application/submission**, wherever applicable.
- The statements should clearly demonstrate sufficient funds to cover the student's travel and associated expenses.

6. Income Tax Returns (ITR)

- Parent/guardian's **Income Tax Return / ITR Assessment documents for the last 3 years.**

7. GST Registration Certificate – If Self-Employed

- If the sponsoring parent/guardian is self-employed or operates a business, provide a copy of the **GST Registration Certificate**, where applicable.

8. Previous Travel History

- Details of previous international travel, if any.
- Copies of previous visas.
- Relevant entry/exit stamps or other evidence showing previous travel dates, wherever available.

9. Additional Financial Documents – Recommended

To strengthen the financial profile, the sponsoring parent/guardian may also provide copies of:

- Fixed Deposits (FDs)
- LIC/investment documents
- Property ownership/valuation documents
- Other investments or savings
- Certified copies of relevant supporting documents, wherever applicable

Important: All financial documents should be consistent with the information provided in the visa application and should clearly establish the sponsor's financial capacity to support the student's trip.

5. REGIONAL APPLICATION NUANCES

5.1 Applicants from India

- **Submission:** Primarily via VFS Global or TLS contact centres.
- **Biometrics:** All students (usually above 12 years) must appear personally for fingerprinting.
- **MAMS Role:** A MAMS representative should ideally accompany the group to the VFS appointment to manage the dossier handover.
- **Medical clearance:** Ensure Yellow Fever vaccination certificates are obtained if transiting through endemic zones (e.g., Ethiopia/Kenya) en route to South Africa or the UK.

5.2 Applicants from the Middle East (UAE, Qatar, Oman, etc.)

- **Residency Rule:** Students residing in the Middle East must apply from their country of residence, not India.
- **Residence Visa:** Must provide proof of valid residency (e.g., UAE Residence Visa/Emirates ID) valid for at least 3-6 months beyond the return date.
- **Bank Statements:** Must be from the local Middle East bank account, not an Indian NRE account (unless specifically explained).
- **School Letter:** NOC must come from their local Middle East school.

6. OPERATIONAL TIMELINE (The "T-Minus" Schedule)

Timeline	Action Item	Responsibility
T-120 Days	Finalise Tour Squad & collect initial passport scans.	Coach / Admin
T-110 Days	Issue the "Visa Document Checklist" to parents.	MAMS Admin
T-100 Days	Deadline for receiving all physical documents from parents.	MAMS Admin
T-90 Days	Visa Submission - File applications immediately.	
T-75 Days	Expected Decisions	Parents
T-60 Days	Follow up on any delayed applications.	Visa Agent / Admin
T-45 Days	Reapplication for any rejected applications.	MAMS Admin
T-5 Days	Distribute "Travel Folders" to the Tour Manager (copies of all consent forms).	MAMS Admin

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A. MAMS Administration

- Provide invitation letters and itinerary.
- Share Google Drive Folder (with sub folder of each student) to upload their respective documents.

- Vet all parental documents for completeness before submission.
- Draft the "Team Cover Letter", listing all players to link applications.

B. Parents/Guardians

- Ensure passports are valid.
- Provide notarised consent forms (NOCs)
- Provide clear financial documentation.
- Provide Sponsorship Letters.
- Upload all required documents (as per checklist) in their ward's Google Drive folder.

C. Tour Manager (Chaperone)

- Carry the "Master Folder" during travel containing:
- Original Parental Consent Affidavits for all players
- Copy of Return Tickets and Accommodation for the whole group.
- Emergency contact list for all parents.
- Health Insurance policies for the team.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT & CONTINGENCY

8.1 Documentation Control

- Use of **standardised document checklists** per destination. No submission to be made without the checklist being completed fully by each applicant.
- Verification of financial, academic, parental consent, and travel documents before submission.
- Issuance of a **formal MAMS Support Letter** clearly stating:
 - Educational and sporting purpose of travel
 - Supervision framework and safeguarding protocols
 - Accommodation, itinerary, and return assurances

8.2 Timeline Management

- Visa processes initiated **well in advance** of travel dates.
- Buffer periods built in for re-submission where possible.
- Priority scheduling for biometrics and appointments when available.

8.3 Applicant Briefing

- Students and parents briefed on:
 - Visa interview expectations
 - Financial disclosure requirements
 - Importance of truthful and consistent information

9. Visa Refusal – Contingency Protocol

1. Immediate Review

The refusal letter is analysed to identify the stated grounds for rejection.

2. Corrective Action (Time Permitting)

- If refusal is based on **insufficient funds, unclear purpose of travel, or documentation gaps**, MAMS

Sports Tours may issue a **strengthened support letter** and provide additional clarifications.

- Supporting documents may be revised or supplemented.

3. **Re-application**

- A fresh visa application may be submitted where timelines allow.
- **Industry Standard:** Visa application fees are **non-refundable**, and a re-application requires payment of the **full applicable visa fee again**, along with any service or biometric charges.

4. **Limitations & Disclosure**

- Final visa decisions rest solely with the issuing authority.
 - MAMS Sports Tours does not guarantee visa approval.
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10. Financial & Participation Contingencies

- Visa fees, service charges, and re-application costs are borne by the **parent/guardian** unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- In the event of non-approval:
 - Participation may be cancelled or deferred.
 - Refunds, if any, will be governed by the **Tour Cancellation & Refund Policy**.
- Tour itineraries may be adjusted if individual students are unable to travel.

Existing Valid Visa – Cost Adjustment Clause

Students who already hold a **valid visa** for the tour destination that meets the **duration, entry, and purpose requirements** of the proposed programme will **not be required to reapply** for a visa.

In such cases:

- The **actual visa application cost** (including embassy fees and third-party service charges, if applicable) will be **adjusted against the total tour cost**.
- Any **documentation verification or administrative processing charges**, if incurred, may still apply.
- Acceptance of an existing visa is subject to **final verification** by MAMS Sports Tours and the relevant embassy guidelines.

This adjustment will be reflected in the **final tour invoice** issued to the parent/guardian or school.

11. Escalation & Communication Protocol

- All visa refusals or high-risk cases are escalated to **MAMS Management**.
- Parents/guardians are informed promptly and transparently.

- Partner schools are updated where group travel is impacted.

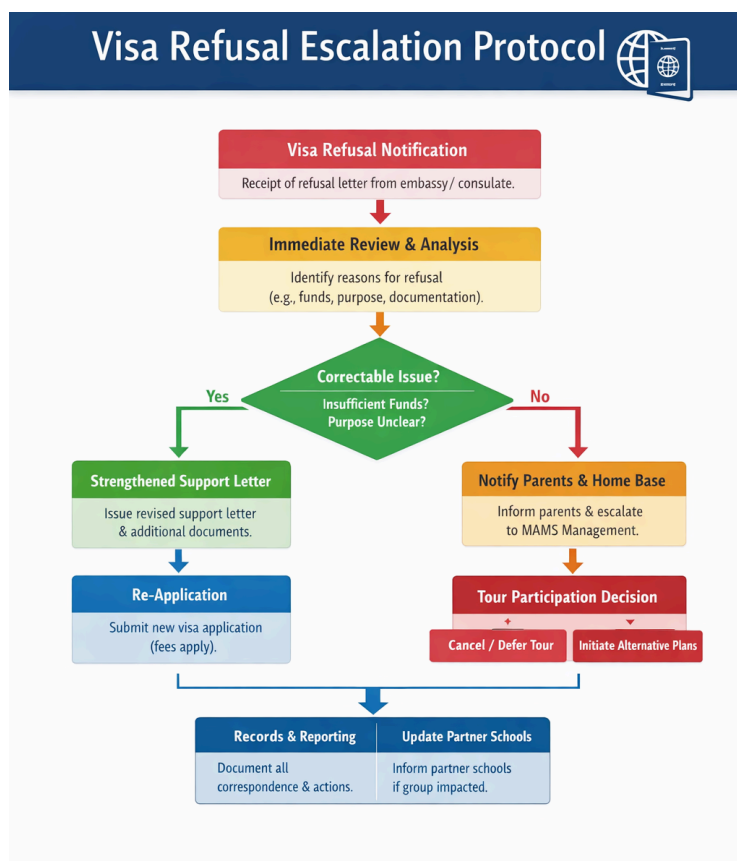
12. Documentation & Record Keeping

- Copies of all visa submissions, refusal letters, and correspondence are securely maintained.
- Records are retained in accordance with **data protection and safeguarding standards**.

13. Acknowledgement

By submitting documents for visa processing, parents/guardians acknowledge:

- Visa approval is solely at the discretion of the respective **embassy or consulate**.
- Visa application fees are **non-refundable**, regardless of outcome.
- In case of refusal, any **re-application costs** will be borne by me.
- MAMS Sports Tours does not guarantee visa approval.



- **Visa Refusal:** In case of refusal, immediately review the refusal letter. If the reason is "insufficient funds" or "purpose unclear," MAMS will issue a stronger support letter for a re-application (time permitting).
- **Processing Delays:** If a visa is delayed, the Tour Manager will draft an emergency contingency plan to travel with the main group while a secondary staff member waits for the late student(s) (subject to parental approval).
- **Limitations:** MAMS Sports Tours cannot guarantee visa approval, as final decisions rest solely with the respective embassy or visa authority. **Visa Fees and Re-Application Costs:** Visa application fees are generally **non-refundable** regardless of outcome. In the event of a visa refusal, any subsequent application will require **payment of the standard visa application fee again**, along with any associated service or processing fees. Parents/guardians are responsible for these costs, which are outside the control of MAMS Sports Tours.

Authorized By: [Arpit Panjwani], Director of Operations, MAMS Sports Tours