

Monday 19 April 2021

Dear Parents,

Since we first communicated with you in December about Israel experiences 2021, we have strived to remain hopeful and positive whilst also being honest and realistic about the possibility of group travel to Israel in summer 2021 for those in years 11 and 12 (S4 and S5 in Scotland).

We are saddened to announce today that, despite the best efforts of UJIA, the Jewish Agency for Israel and our youth movement partners, we will not be opening applications for Israel experiences for summer 2021 and the programmes will not be taking place this year.

As you are aware, the pandemic has placed major barriers in the way of us planning these trips. Whilst we are still hopeful that many of you and your families might be able to experience Israel this summer, group travel on the scale of Israel experiences poses unique challenges. There are currently no group or individual travel insurance policies on offer that would fully cover participants in various cancellation and curtailment scenarios such as those involving them contracting COVID-19 whilst in Israel or the case of a government-imposed lockdown or border closure. Israel is currently only allowing vaccinated tourists through their borders and all your children will not be fully vaccinated by the summer. Furthermore, the expensive and copious testing protocols, coupled with the obstructive quarantine requirements in Israel, present further difficulties. On top of the numerous restrictions currently operating and the possible health risks, there are also other potential issues for which we still do not have solutions. Throughout this process our highest priorities have always been the health, wellbeing and safety of our participants and leaders. We have also been mindful of the need to make decisions in a timely fashion. We are therefore providing clarity in good time for exciting alternative programming to be planned by the youth movements, and for you as families to explore options for your summer.

We have made this decision with heavy hearts and in the full awareness of how disappointing this news will be. UJIA Israel Experience and the youth movements have been taking Jewish teenagers to Israel for over 40 years. An educational experience in Israel for many young British Jews is a rite of passage that helps develop a strong connection to Israel. Over the next two years, as the effects of the pandemic lessen, UJIA Israel Experience is committed to supporting dedicated future trips and opportunities for anybody who missed out in 2020 and 2021. We hope we will be able to organise group trips to Israel soon, and once we can, your children will have priority for a place. More information on these exciting Israel opportunities will be released in the coming weeks.

Although we cannot all be together in Israel this summer, we hope that there will be many other in-person opportunities for Israel engagement in the next few months. Your child's youth movement will be getting in touch with them soon to explain these in more detail. Your child still has a place at the heart of their youth movement and our community, and there will be many more opportunities for them to get involved in the future and to grow and develop, both as participants and as leaders.

We want to thank you for your continuous patience, understanding and support during this challenging time. The youth movements can answer any questions you might have; or you can contact us directly.

Kind regards,



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