

Outcome of Recent Residentials and School Trips Consultation

Many thanks to everybody who responded to our recent consultation regarding residential visits and school day trips. This has been a really valuable exercise to help us to match our future offer to the needs and preferences of our school community. All responses and comments have been carefully considered. As might be anticipated, we received quite a range of thoughts and opinions but this was, in itself, helpful in prompting us to consider all views whilst, ultimately guiding us to create a “best fit” plan moving forwards.

- We received 155 responses to help inform our future plans
- 92.9% of respondents thought it was beneficial for their child/children to attend residential trips with school. This has led us to be secure in the knowledge that pursuing safe, affordable residential opportunities for our children is something that the vast majority of our families want us to do.
- There was not a clear majority outcome to the question of how many residential visits you would like your children to attend during their time at primary school.
- However, what was more apparent was the view expressed by more than half of respondents (61%) that Year 2 is considered too young for parents/carers to be comfortable with their child being away from home with school. This, in itself, indicated to us that we should consider a change to our previous residentials offer whereby Year 2 children used to attend Barnstondale on the Wirral for 2 nights; Year 4 also had a 2 night, 3 day residential; and Year 6 had 4 nights, 5 days at PGL, Boreatton Park.
- With this in mind, we are planning to offer two residential opportunities moving forwards – the first in Year 4 and the second in Year 6. We considered continuing with three residentials but felt that, with the requirement to increase the age of the first trip away, three residentials in four years, between Years 3-6 might be economically challenging to many families.
- We did consider whether Year 3 might be a better alternative for our first residential. However, due to Covid restrictions in the past two academic years, our current Year 4s missed Barnstondale and, if we were to have planned a Year 3 residential, they would also have missed this opportunity. Whilst we recognise that all of our junior year groups have missed the opportunity for one residential trip, by opting for Years 4 and 6 moving forwards, all children will still have the opportunity for two residentials during their time with us at our school.
- We also know that, in the past, our Year 2 children thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the opportunity to experience the activities and excitement of attending Barnstondale. We are, therefore, including an extended day visit for Year 2 pupils to Barnstondale, whereby they will be able to enjoy the challenge of several of the activities and experience the evening meal and

campfire, before returning home in the evening. Details about this will be shared with our current Year 2 families in the next few days.

- 83% of parents stated that £300 (or less) would be the maximum amount they feel is affordable for a school residential trip. Knowing this, we are responding by booking shorter residential trips, moving away from our previous practice of taking Year 6 to PGL from Monday to Friday. A Monday to Friday residential in the summer term at PGL would currently cost approximately £440 (and we can only assume this will continue to increase) We recognise that this is considerably more than the majority of respondents feel is affordable.
- Our planned offer moving forwards is to continue to offer a day and evening visit for Year 2s to a local activity centre, returning home in the evening, and to offer 2 night, 3 day residentials to different venues for our Year 4 and Year 6 cohorts. This will be planned for progression so that, by Year 6, the “big ticket” experiences of Boreatton Park (Giant Swing; Kayaking; Climbing etc..) can be experienced at the larger site; whilst in Year 4, PGL’s ‘Pioneers’ programme will be offered on a smaller site, slightly closer to home.
- Finally, it was really positive to see that the majority of respondents to our consultation are in favour of day visits and school trips on a far more frequent basis than we have previously felt comfortable arranging. We are always mindful of the impact on families of arranging school visits which incur a cost implication. Whilst the law states that parent contributions to day trips are on a voluntary basis, the reality is that, without these contributions, school would often be unable to offer the trip as costs to school budget would be too prohibitive. A number of respondents commented that they were ‘disappointed’ with number of trips offered, even before Covid-19, and this is feedback which we will certainly take on board.
- That said, please be assured that we constantly seek ways of planning safe, local trips which minimise costs, using our own minibus and Boys’ Brigade minibus – we are extremely grateful to the Boys’ Brigade for providing us with this option.

As always, it is essential to remember that no child should ever miss out on any school opportunity, whether that is a day trip, a residential or any other opportunity, purely because it is economically unviable for a school family to afford it. I would always urge anyone who feels this might be the case to speak, in confidence, to either myself or Mrs Duckworth. We have various ways of offering potential support, including the Trustees Educational Fund, to make extra-curricular opportunities accessible to all of our children. Please do not ever feel uncomfortable asking; our school vision embodies our commitment to ensuring that **all** children have the opportunity to thrive and flourish and experience ‘life in all its fullness’ and that is something we are genuinely committed to.

Again, many thanks to all of you who responded to this consultation and, in doing so, helped to shape the extra-curricular offer available to your children.

Wendy Mason

21st November 2021