



Monday 18th October 2021

Dear Year 5 Parents

France Residential – May 2022

Thank you to those of you who joined the online meeting last Monday 11th October. I am writing with a further update and also to answer some questions that three parents have contacted me to ask.

Each year we hold a meeting about the forthcoming residential to France and this meeting is to explain the purpose of the visit, (as linked to our curriculum), the itinerary, and indicative costs etc. There is always a Q&A session and parents often ask more about food, rooms, etc. At this stage we often find that some parents decide that they do not wish for their child to go to France. For example, in 2019, we took 76 children and in 2018 we took 67 (each time out of 90). There are always some families who take the decision not to attend and we often find that numbers increase for the Year 6 residential visit the following year.

Clearly, this year things are far more complicated given the pandemic. However, as a school, we took the decision to proceed with offering this visit as it is such a key part of our history and French curriculum. At the very least, we wanted to see whether this was feasible and talk to parents about this trip. I very much recognise that although I said at the beginning of the meeting, that I was only going to explain about the itinerary etc, the absence of detailed information about Covid has for some parents been unsettling and for that I apologise. However, the fact of the matter is that we are in somewhat of a 'chicken and egg' situation where this residential visit is concerned. In order to further progress any risk assessments, we would need to have an approximate number of children going on the visit. Taking 80 children to France would be very different to taking 40 children; for example, the total number of children impacts numbers of adults we take, sizes and numbers of coaches, which space we are allocated in the hotel etc. Hence why we followed the advice to share information about the trip, as usual, with parents. This is a meeting that does have to be held now as if we are to confirm tentative bookings (note that nothing has been finalised or paid for at this stage) then we need to know how many parents are interested in their child attending. Even at this stage risk assessments would be subject to change in accordance with foreign travel advice.

We have continued to liaise with the borough's Advisor for Outdoor Education about each of our residential visits and in particular this one that is abroad and he has advised that it is not possible to



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know what the travel requirements will be next May and that there is nothing more we can do/advise at this stage.

We have been provided with the following two links:

<https://oeapng.info/download/1228/> and <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/entry-requirements>

Currently the UK is on the 'amber list' of France but there is no requirement for those under 12 to have a test (either LFT or PCR) prior to travel to France. Any adults attending the visit would be those who are double vaccinated.

Regarding any restrictions currently on returning to the UK from France, the green and amber lists were abolished two weeks ago – however, we do not know what changes there may be before May.

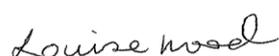
It is always the case that a child may become ill on any residential visit and as such, although this has fortunately never been the case, a contingency would be that a parent may need to travel out to support their child. However, the way the trip is organised is that a staff member would be able to remain at the hotel with a child who is feeling poorly and this has happened before. Similarly, we have also taken a child for medical care while out in France and this was able to happen efficiently and the child was able to quickly rejoin the rest of the party having been well cared for while their peers enjoyed their activities. The local authority currently do not have any information about quarantining abroad if anyone tests positive while in France but, like us, is aware that this is a concern for schools and parents.

Health and safety is always of paramount importance. As stated in the meeting, if the school, Trust or local authority feel that it is not in the best interests of anyone concerned to continue with this trip, then we would be able to cancel the residential and refund the deposit.

We will continue to liaise with the local authority advisors in order to ensure that we have the most up to date information possible. Tomorrow, for example, we are attending an Educational Visits Forum where the London Borough of Sutton Insurance Team are going to be discussing overseas visits further. We are committed to providing parents with as much information as we have available to us at a given time.

Parents ultimately make the decision as to whether they wish for their child to attend the residential to France, but we recognise that it is indeed more challenging this year to make this decision. However, as stated previously, as a school we are in a 'catch 22' and we cannot proceed unless we know how many parents would be interested in their child attending on the understanding that we would absolutely not proceed should we not be fully satisfied with our risk assessments, and indeed that the trip may not go ahead anyway (dependent on foreign travel advice). The indicative cost of £310 per person was based on 70 children attending. As of today, 37 parents have paid the deposit for their child. The deadline for the deposit is Monday 1st November. We do not necessarily need 70 children to attend and the per person cost is very much dependent on the size of the coach we book. Thus, when we review numbers on 2nd November we may find that the number who have paid a deposit equates to too small a party size for the trip to be viable.

Kind regards



Louise Wood
Headteacher