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Wednesday 24th March 2021

NEWSLETTER EXTRA

Dear Parent,

We trust that you are all well and significantly less stretched now that all the children are back at school. There are just two items of note for you below; a response is required from parents of children in KS 2.

INTERIM REPORTS

You will know that, at this time of the year, we usually send home interim reports to let you know the standard at which your child is currently working as assessed through their classroom work. Because of the long lock down during the past three months it has not been possible to accurately assess pupils in the usual way; that is, by observing pupils working, interacting with them in class, reading how well they collaborate with others and marking their books in person. In addition, with the sudden hospitalisation of Mrs Palmer, it has not been possible to record some of the pupils' prior attainment. For these reasons assessments are unavoidably 'patchy' and could be misleading if shared. Therefore, we will not be reporting to you at this time.

The school will follow government guidance and, in the summer terms, make more formal assessments of pupil progress using previous test materials as well as using the opportunity of face-to-face teaching to assess during day-to-day activity. In this way we will address the assessment gap that lock down has left us with and then report to you in July using end of year reports.

KS 2 RESIDENTIAL VISIT

Planning anything this year has been difficult and wrought with uncertainty. There is no DfE guidance about whether or not school trips may run in the summer terms and there is not likely to be any until after the government review on 12th April. You will appreciate that this makes planning challenging. Our residential visits, however, are booked years in advance to ensure that we secure a place.

A short while ago we asked for your opinion with regard to running the residential visit which had been booked, two years ago, for 19th - 23rd April 2021.

40% of parents expressed a wish for their child to attend a residential visit
31% of parents preferred not to send their child on a residential visit
5% were unsure, and,
22% did not respond

The school recognises that there is not enough support for the residential visit to go ahead irrespective of any forthcoming government guidance. However, the school is, once again, in the unique position of being the first school which could possibly visit Kilvrough on a residential and which will have no period of notice before, potentially, running such a visit. This presents a series of difficulties:

- If we were to cancel the booking and school trips are then allowed by the government post Easter then the school would be liable for paying the fees: The school trip insurance will only cover the school if the Government does not allow school trips.
- If we were to go ahead, we would be likely to receive insufficient contributions from parents and still be liable for the whole cost of the fees.

- If we were to go ahead some children would likely be left in school working from Google Classroom almost as an extension to lock down learning. This would not be an inclusive experience.

Fortunately, the centre has recognised the difficult position we are in and has, today, made a counter offer to mitigate against financial loss and still give the children an outdoor and adventure experience that they will enjoy.

The centre will provide an outdoor experience for the children right here in Oxfordshire. While the children will not experience building independence by being away from home, they could still benefit from experiencing some of the activities we would normally undertake while staying at an outdoor centre:

Team building and problem solving
Orienteering
Climbing wall
Life in the trenches
Bushcraft
Canoeing

The base for these activities would be at Hill End field study centre near Farmoor Reservoir. The children would travel to Hill End by bus daily for three days. Day two would be a longer day, finishing at 6pm to enable the children to make a campfire and have a fish and chip supper together.

All activities would be outdoors and Covid safety precautions would also be followed.

All activities would be subject to relevant guidance at the time and children may also be required to wear masks on the bus.

The cost for this, per child, would be in the region of £130. This includes £110 for the course and an approximate cost of £20 for the travel (bus prices have yet to be ascertained).

Before we make any arrangements we need to gauge opinion, once again, and find out how many of you would be happy for your child to take part. With sufficient participants we can then make arrangements and forward all further details. Please indicate your intention by emailing Maria Withey in the school office. Please also note that this experience will only happen if the government allows school trips in the summer term.

Any absence from the arranged trip owing to Covid would qualify for a full refund.

We hope to hear from you very soon.

Best wishes,



Valerie Lucas
Head Teacher