



6th November 2017

Dear parents,

The Ashcombe School is proud to continue its tradition of providing a wide range of study trips and educational visits, which have offered pupils experience of many countries, including Germany, France, USA, Iceland and Italy, whilst the regular visits to Romania, Africa and China are key elements of the Ashcombe story over the past twenty-five years. Visits offer many benefits to pupils who participate in them, including giving an insight into a different culture, developing language skills, and learning new skills when participating in, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils may also benefit by learning to work collaboratively with other Ashcombe pupils or by increasing their independence and resilience.

Our trips are only possible because the staff who lead and support them are willing to volunteer their own time in the evenings and weekends without remuneration to undertake these very demanding tasks, and during residential trips, they must often leave partners at home to care for the family. I am extremely grateful to them, and to parent volunteers, for their vital role in enabling a rewarding programme of enrichment activities at The Ashcombe. Besides overseas trips, we offer many opportunities closer to home, from social outings to study visits. But this wide range can bring its own challenge for parents and carers in balancing the benefits and merits of each opportunity against the cost, especially for those with more than one child at the school.

We have written annually for the past three years listing the major trips and explaining the complexity surrounding the trips and visit programme. We appreciate that parents and carers can be presented with difficult choices particularly relating to costs. On the other hand, pupils greatly appreciate the rich and attractive variety of experiences and we hope that all pupils will be able to benefit from at least one residential trip during their time at The Ashcombe.

Costs can soon mount up, particularly if several suitable trips are available in quick succession so, in an effort to help you and your children prioritise and plan for the major trips which interest them, please find enclosed a list of our **planned** visits. The list is offered in two versions ~ one sorted by year group and the other by subject. **Not every trip will take place each year, as circumstances may change and the viability of each one depends on receiving enough support. Similarly, the actual cost of the trip may differ from that on the list.**

We are keen to hear your views about how these valuable educational experiences can be made accessible to as many as possible, and whether the list provides the right level of information for making informed decisions. Please send your comments, questions and ideas to Mr Panting on panting.chris@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk Although some issues will never have a simple or feasible solution, the comments from parents last year helped us to refine some of our approaches. In some cases, we can provide flexible payment schemes, and notes at the head of the lists refer to circumstances in which some financial help may be offered. Mrs Reed will be pleased to provide further information if you think you may qualify reed.alison@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk

We hope this list will be of use.

Yours sincerely,

D.J. Blow
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