



TOWN CLOSE SCHOOL

NORWICH'S FINEST PREP SCHOOL • FOR GIRLS & BOYS • 3-13 YEARS

HUMANITIES TRIP 2017

Monday 20th March – Saturday 25th March

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Dear Parents

Contained in this letter is a vast amount of vital and useful information. Please forgive the business-like tone but, as I am sure you will comprehend, I must be rather succinct when imparting information for a trip of this nature.

As mentioned in my last letter I will be holding a meeting, in the Read Hall, at 4.15pm on Monday 27th February. I urge all parents, if possible, to come to this meeting. It plays an important part in the preparations for the trip.

Following the meeting Mrs Kendrick and I will be available in my classroom for any confidential conversations parents may wish to have. Please feel free to come with or without your child. Should you have any queries, but cannot make this date, please contact me at school as soon as possible.

During the course of this letter I will outline the major issues that arise from the Humanities Trip. I have organised the information in bullet points in order to provide greater clarity.

- **Travel**

We travel with Richard's Coaches. The coach is equipped with seatbelts and a lavatory.

We travel to Caen, France, with Brittany Ferries early on the morning of Tuesday 21st March.

We return to England on Saturday 25th March, via the Channel Tunnel, from Calais to Dover.

On the night of Monday 20th March we are staying at:

Ibis Hotel
Fratton Way
Portsmouth
PO4 8SL
UK

From Tuesday 21st March – Saturday 25th March we are staying at:

Château du Molay
Molay- Littry
14330
France

Staff rooms are interspersed amongst the children's rooms at both the Ibis and at the chateau.

- I shall be in touch with school on a daily basis. The school will be able to contact me on my mobile phone.

- We will also be taking a school mobile phone to allow contact in an emergency. The number will be available to parents prior to departure.

We plan to leave by **8.15am** on Monday 20th from the **Hall Road Retail Park** (Homebase, Pets at Home, Hughes, Aldi). This is situated on Hall Road opposite McDonalds.

Please ensure your child arrives at the Hall Road Retail Park by 8.00 am

The retail park is an excellent departure point especially given that it is much safer for packing the coach and loading the children than were the coach to have to park outside school during the morning rush hour.

We will provide a continental breakfast and drink for your child but could you please supply a packed lunch and a drink. I should be grateful if no fizzy drinks are included. We must be able to dispose of all packaging after lunch so please do not send lunch boxes, thermoses or any other items which you would want to be returned home as this will not be possible.

On Saturday 25th we will be returning to the school's Ipswich Road entrance. We hope to be back in Norwich by mid afternoon - our crossing should get into the UK by around midday but delays en route back to Norfolk and statutory rest periods for the coach driver are, of course, beyond our control. All going well we hope to be back by 4.30 - 5.00pm... fingers (and toes) firmly crossed – staff and children alike will be keen to get home!

• **Passports and EHIC**

As per my previous letters, all children require their own passport and EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). **Based upon an article I read recently it appears that many EHICs expired in 2016 so please check.** Application forms for an EHIC are available from all Post Offices or they can be ordered on line. However, do be aware that they can take some time to be processed so if your child does not have one I suggest an application is made immediately.

Whilst understanding that many families have private health insurance I know from experience that a valid EHIC is **VITAL** in order to receive initial health care in France and is obligatory in the case of hospitalisation.

N.B. No child will be allowed to travel without a valid EHIC or passport. Please would you be kind enough to hand in your child's passport and EHIC in a sealed, named envelope to Mrs Windle, in the Prep Department Office, for safekeeping by **Monday 27th February at the latest.**

VITALLY IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING OUR OVERNIGHT STAY IN PORTSMOUTH

As our stay in Portsmouth is very brief we will NOT be taking any luggage off the coach. It is therefore vital that items required for the overnight stay are packed in your child's small 'hand luggage' ruck sack (see below under the section entitled Work Equipment) which they will have with them on the coach, at the hotel and on the ferry. They will only need to pack nightwear, a change of underwear, basic toiletries and any chargers required for their electronic equipment.

The Ibis hotel, in Portsmouth, will provide soap/ shampoo and towels so these items, which are required at the chateau, should be packed in your child's main luggage bag which will remain on the coach over night. Unloading 54 bags of luggage upon arrival in Portsmouth, in order to find your child's bag, if they have over looked an item in their overnight ruck sack, will not be possible

or practical. I therefore urge you and your child to make sure that all they require for day 1, our overnight stay and the ferry is packed in their 'hand luggage' ruck sack.

- **Clothing, Footwear, Personal Hygiene and Bags (a lot of these, in various sizes, are needed!)**

A tricky area this one, where I hope, optimistically, that common sense will ultimately prevail. We will be in 'Home Clothes' for the week (no school uniform required).

The following areas need to be considered.

Weather – A warm jacket/coat and a waterproof jacket with a hood (school one is fine) are a must. They are VITAL.

A warm hat and gloves are also recommended. We spend most of our time outside and I have lost count of the number of children who have, over the years, said they are cold simply because they are not wearing enough layers. To quote Alfred Wainwright – “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing”.

Trainers – During the course of the week we do a great deal of walking as well as scrambling up banks, going into bunkers and gun defences, walking along beaches etc.

Trainers are extremely practical; I would go as far as saying they are **vitaly important** on the trip especially for sites where wellingtons are not required but sensible foot wear is. **I strongly suggest your child has a pair with them.**

It would be sensible if they were worn on the Monday to travel in.

Wellington Boots – a must! Depending upon the weather many of the sites we are visiting will require a pair of wellington boots (water may go over the top of walking boots) to make the most of the visit and keep your child’s feet dry.

The wellies need to be packed in a strong bag - re-usable supermarket ones are ideal. The boots will be in and out of this bag over the course of the week so it needs to be stronger than a thin carrier bag. A named boot bag would be fine however; please bear in mind, that the bag may be under your child’s seat during the week so these cannot be too substantial.

Please do not pack the wellie bag in your child’s luggage as boots stay on the coach.

Please make sure that the bag, containing the boots, is clearly labelled with a large name label clearly visible on the bag – this avoids disputes!

General Clothing – An appropriate number of trousers/tracksuit bottoms (these may get damp, given the type of sites included in the trip so please bare this in mind), tops, sweatshirts, hoodies, t-shirts, socks, vests and pants/ knickers etc for a week.

Onesies or pyjama bottoms – Please do not wear them on our day of travel! A few such items appeared on the day of departure last year and, although I am sure they are extremely comfortable to travel in, they are simply not appropriate on the trip - other than to sleep in.

Girls please note - skirts are not suitable

Please include a **bag for dirty washing**. This will help your child to keep their room and clothes organised.

Personal Hygiene - A tricky area! We do our level best to ensure that each child showers, washes and cleans their teeth every day, but we cannot physically force them to comply. So, in essence, the children have to take a little self-responsibility in this area.

Please send a small shower gel/soap and shampoo with your child as these are not provided at the chateau. Speaking from experience, on previous trips, please make sure that any

bottles which may leak (e.g. shampoo etc) are in a sealed bag to avoid spillage.

Do remember tooth paste, deodorant and any other toiletries your child may require.

Please - no make-up or face masks (with which we have had problems in the past ...yes really!), stick on false eyelashes and nails; the list could go on.

Towel – Your child will need to bring their own towel for use at the chateau. Please pack a bag to put this in on the day of departure, from the chateau, as it is likely to be damp.

Luggage – Please make sure that your child’s luggage is clearly labelled with a large label. 54+ bags all look rather similar to the children when it comes to claiming them upon arrival at our destination.

Please can I implore you to be sensible regarding the size/ weight of your child’s bag as space under the coach is limited. Additionally your child will have to carry their bag to their bedrooms, which will be up flights of stairs.

A ‘squashy’ sports type bag is much more practical than a suitcase.

In the past; essential packing has been augmented with a bizarre variety of items including a table top air hockey game, a large music centre with a separate speaker unit, Twister and other boxed ‘party games’, photo albums, vast quantities of sweets and biscuits and much more. However much your child tries to persuade you otherwise **please only pack the required items rather than ‘treats/home comforts’**. It got to the stage last year that I half expected to see a much loved family pony looking expectantly at me from one of the bedrooms!

- **Pocket Money**

Another tricky area, as much for you as I suspect for me. For what they are worth here are a few thoughts based upon my previous experience. Most children, historically, have taken in the region of 8 -10 Euros per day. The only place in England for your child to spend money is at our ‘comfort stops’, at service stations, on our way from and to Norwich on the day of departure and on the return journey.

The children are responsible for their own money and should use named wallets.

There is, as such, no limit to the amount of pocket money a child may bring but I urge you to be sensible. Please talk to your children about budgeting for the week and whether you expect them to bring home gifts etc.

- **Technology - Mobile phones, Digital cameras, Tablets etc**

The children are allowed to bring electronic devices with them **BUT** they will only be allowed to use them on the coach journey from Norwich to Portsmouth, on the ferry to France and on the coach journey home from France. They are entirely responsible for their equipment so please ensure that all items are clearly named and that your child is aware of the responsibility involved in keeping track of their precious personal items. These will be collected in after the journey to France and then returned for the return trip. It is often the case that an older, less valuable but equally suitable piece of technological equipment from home may be available for them to use. Do not be swayed by the frequently muttered statement “but everyone else is bringing theirs”. Generally, as I am sure you are only too aware, this is not the case!

Pupils will be clearly briefed as to what they can and cannot use devices for and any inappropriate use will result in them being confiscated.

Please note that you will not be able to make contact with your child by calling their phones or messaging them while we are away but you will be able to contact the teachers, on the trip, who will have school phones with them.

Children may bring digital or disposable cameras, which again should be named and is their responsibility, provided that the camera has no other capability and is not internet enabled. They will not be able to use the cameras on phones or other devices.

Please remember to **pack adaptor plugs** and a charger so that your child can recharge their devices.

Please make sure chargers, adapter plugs etc are named as they quickly get muddled with similar ones. Do remember to pack spare batteries, some digital cameras require them, and make sure that memory cards, for digital cameras, have adequate space on them.

Children may not bring their school iPads on the trip.

- **Work Equipment**

Each child requires a **zipped bag, with shoulder strap** or small (ish!) **rucksack** for use on the coach/overnight stay in Portsmouth/ferry.

The children will be using this bag/ rucksack for their overnight stay in Portsmouth and during the week for wallets, cameras, pencil cases, packed lunches etc so please make sure they are of an adequate size, secure and easy to carry. The bag will have to allow your child to have their hands free for writing etc. The children will also require a **pencil case** with a pen, pencils, crayons and felts. Please ensure these are packed in the bag.

- **Behaviour**

Although we are out of school, school rules still apply. However I would like to stress that every child starts with an entirely clean slate.

My **main concern**, with regard to behaviour is that, if I am dealing with one child or having my eye on one child on a consistent basis, then attention to the others is compromised and this, for a variety of academic and health and safety issues, is clearly not desirable.

I really do look for your support in this area and that, furthermore, you imbue your child with the sense that he/she is not only representing the School, on this trip, but very much your family and himself/herself.

- **Staff**

The members of staff accompanying the trip are: Mr David Hall, Mrs Naomi Webb, my wife, Nina, who helps coordinate many aspects of the trip, is the trip's linguist and is in charge of all medical issues, two of the Town Close Gap Year Students and finally; myself.

A ratio of roughly 1:9 is excellent for a trip such as this and falls well within the acceptable ratios for insurance and Health and Safety guidelines of the various sites/visits.

- **Medical Requirements**

As per my last letter, regarding the compiling of medical and dietary requirement information, I should like to remind you that I shall be using the medical information the school holds for your child. This is also the case for contact telephone numbers. **May I remind you to contact the Front Office immediately if you think your child's medical/ dietary requirement details require updating equally so please be in touch if any of your contact numbers need updating.**

If your child is on any medication, at the time of departure, this needs to be named and handed to Mrs Kendrick on the day of departure. Information about dosage and frequency must also be included.

I will be sending you an itinerary in the next few weeks, but I felt that it was important that the information sent in this communication was of a practical nature as they will help you and your child to prepare for the trip. I am also sending a packing check list which, in the past, has proved helpful. I hope this continues to be the case.

I look forward to seeing you on Monday 27th February at 4.15pm.

Yours sincerely



Richard Kendrick