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*Be strong and
courageous.....for
the Lord your God is
with you*

Tuesday 05 September 2025

Dear Year 5 Parents and Carers,

RE: Year 6 Residential Arrangements

Thank you to those who attended the meeting last week regarding our Year 6 residential arrangements. Following the meeting, I have received further questions from parents. I understand how important this experience is for our children, and I want to ensure all parents have access to a full explanation of our decision-making process and the factors we carefully considered.

Our Decision

Our Year 6 residential is an important part of our curriculum offer, providing children with opportunities to develop independence, resilience, teamwork and our Strong and Courageous values through experiences that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

In reviewing our provision, it was essential that we maintained:

- A broad range of high-quality learning activities
- A meaningful off-site residential element
- Strong educational value
- An experience accessible to all children

Over recent years, the cost of a 5-day residential trip has become increasingly unsustainable for both families and the school, making a comprehensive review of our provision necessary.

After careful consideration, we have changed our Year 6 residential from a 5-day to a 3-day trip. This decision has not been made lightly, and I want to reassure you that it is based on clear evidence gathered over several years.

Why We Made This Change

Financial Accessibility for All Families

Over recent years, we have seen a significant and increasing number of families unable to afford the 5-day residential, even with the additional financial support provided by the school.

For this year's trip alone, the school has subsidised over £5,000 to ensure children could attend. Unfortunately, this level of subsidy is not financially sustainable going forward.



Based on this financial information, continuing with the 5-day residential would either:

- Require even greater school subsidy (which we cannot afford), or
- Result in excluding pupils whose families cannot pay, which is not inclusive.

In the last few years we have been asking parents to fundraise to help cover some of the school's financial support towards the trip, but the feedback was that this was falling on a small number of parents, and that, whilst it is greatly appreciated, the fundraising only provides a small proportion of the financial support the school is having to provide.

Our Priority Is Inclusion

We believe it is better for all children to participate in a shorter residential than for some children to be excluded from a longer one due to cost.

We also recognise that some families prefer not to send their children on overnight stays for personal or cultural reasons. By including two full activity days at school as part of the week, we ensure that every child - whether they attend the residential or not - can participate in outdoor activities and benefit from this important learning experience. This approach means no child misses out entirely, and all pupils can still enjoy shared activities that support independence, resilience and team building.

What We Considered

Alternative Providers

We thoroughly researched alternative providers. Whilst PGL is one of the more expensive options, the alternatives we reviewed either:

- Did not meet our safeguarding or quality standards
- Did not offer sufficient cost savings to make the trip viable for all families
- Were located too far away (increasing travel costs)

Our evaluation considered total cost per pupil, quality and range of activities, location and travel costs, safeguarding standards, educational value, and accessibility for all pupils.

Cost and Value for Money

A shorter residential naturally includes fewer meals and nights

	Previous event	Proposed	
	5 Days residential	3 Days residential	+ 2 Days at School
Sessions	16	8	6
Evening activities	4	2	0
Cost	£533	£322	£0

With the activities provided by PGL and the school, at £322 or (£20.13 per activity) this provides better value for money per activity than £533 (£26.65 per activity).

Additional Activity Days at School

To ensure the whole week remains enriching and cohesive, children will also take part in two activity days at school. These will include outdoor learning, team-building challenges, problem-solving activities, and physical and creative sessions that complement the residential experience.

Some of these activities may take place on the school grounds or off-site at a local venue. This approach ensures that **all pupils, including those not attending the residential, experience key elements of the programme** such as resilience, collaboration, independence and adventure.



We anticipate approximately six structured activities across these two days, ensuring pupils benefit from a broad and balanced programme **at no additional cost to families**.

These activities will support our Year 6 curriculum, including outdoor learning, physical development, problem-solving and teamwork, ensuring the week remains both purposeful and enjoyable.

Educational Value

We have carefully considered the educational benefits of a residential, including building resilience, independence, social development, and team building. Our planned 3 day residential, together with two activity days at school will provide these learning opportunities. Our plans will ensure the whole week remains cohesive, purposeful, and memorable.

Consistency with Previous Years

I genuinely understand your concern about inconsistency with what older siblings experienced, and I recognise the disappointment this causes. However, the financial landscape has changed significantly over the last few years. Our responsibility is to ensure that what we offer is both high-quality and accessible to our current families, and that we can sustainably, provide this experience in future years rather than withdrawing residentially entirely.

Communication

I accept that we could have communicated this process more clearly from the outset, and I apologise if the decision felt sudden. We initially shared the change in July to give families time to consider the arrangements, and held the November meeting to answer questions in detail.

Our Options

In making this decision, we had to choose between:

- A 5-day trip that excludes some children
- A 3-day trip that includes all children
- No residential trip at all

We chose the option that prioritises inclusion while maintaining a valuable residential experience.

Looking Forward

Our focus remains firmly on delivering the best possible experience for all Year 6 children in a way that is both inclusive and sustainable. The 3-day residential at PGL will still offer:

- High-quality outdoor activities
- Opportunities to build independence and resilience
- Team-building and social development
- Memorable experiences with their peers

Combined with the two additional activity days at school, this will be a rich and varied week of learning and personal development.

Yours sincerely



Celine Hawkins
Headteacher

