



4 October, 2019

Dear Parents / Carer

**Year 9 Trip to the First World War Battlefields: Somme and Ypres
(Thursday 21st – Sunday 24th May 2020)**

'Unforgettable and truly inspiring'

'Moving, enjoyable, never nothing to do.'

'A breathtaking experience of something so horrific, yet so important and memorable.'

(Comments made by students about previous Battlefields trips)

I would like to draw to your attention to the proposed trip to the French and Belgian First World War Battlefields next summer, departing from school in the early hours of Thursday 21st May 2020 and spending the night travelling by coach and ferry to Calais. The overnight travel arrangements will be on a spacious luxury coach and will allow the students to make maximum use of the first day of their trip visiting Vimy Ridge and the Musée Somme 1916 in Albert. Students will have an opportunity to experience some French culture and see the beautiful art deco architecture that is synonymous with its reconstruction after the First World War. The students will then travel to their first accommodation venue, Poppies d'Albert, where they will spend their first night.

The next day students will have a teacher-led tour of some of the most famous sites on the Somme battlefield, including Thiepval, the Newfoundland Memorial and the Sheffield Memorial Park. Later in the day they will visit Wellington Quarry, a museum dedicated to showing the complicated network of underground tunnels built by British and Commonwealth troops during the war. Students will then move on to their next accommodation venue in Ypres, De Lork, for two nights. Saturday will include a guided tour of the Ypres Salient, Lijssenthoek Clearing Station and the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, and in the evening students will attend the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, in Ypres. On Sunday students will visit the In Flanders Fields Museum and have an opportunity to visit a chocolate shop in Ypres.

Experiencing the Battlefields first hand not only enables students to place their study of the war in a clearer context but makes a distant experience tangible to them. In our experience, students find a visit to the battlefields deeply moving. Expert guides will accompany us to ensure the students are provided with the best possible experience.

A considerable proportion, although by no means all, of the visit will centre around cemeteries and commemorative monuments and it is appropriate to emphasise from the outset that every member of the group must conduct themselves in a manner sensitive to those visiting family graves and appropriate to the sobriety of the environment. Any commitment to take up a place on the trip must be given with this in mind.

The cost of the trip will be **£375**. This will include all travel to and from school and throughout the trip, full board accommodation, full insurance cover, all excursions and entrance fees, group passport (see below*) and an allowance for emergencies. It does not include breakfast and lunch on the first day or an evening meal on the last day.

For this particular trip the school may be able to provide a subsidy to students who are currently in receipt of free school meals. If applicable, please contact Mr Lillington at school as soon as possible to discuss.

We have tried to strike a balance between giving our students the fullest possible experience and keeping the cost as low as possible. We hope that spreading payments across as great a period of time as possible will go some way to mitigating the cost. If you wish your son / daughter to join the trip, a non-refundable **deposit of £80**, together with the completed reply slip (attached), should be handed to the Finance Office by **Monday 7th October 2019**. Regular instalments must then be paid as follows:

Friday 8 th November 2019	£55
Friday 6 th December 2019	£55
Friday 10 th January 2020	£55
Friday 7 th February 2020	£55
Friday 6 th March 2020	£50
Friday 3 rd April 2020	£25

After the initial deposit has been paid, we would strongly encourage you to use the online payment system for subsequent monthly installments. Please contact the Finance Office if you need assistance with this.

If the interest for this trip exceeds the number of places available then we will draw names of students, in friendship groups, to determine who will be able to attend. If it is the case that your son/daughter is not successful in gaining a place on the trip we will inform you before the October half-term holiday and return your deposit to you. If, on the other hand, there is insufficient interest and the number of students is below the minimum viability for the trip, all deposits will be returned. We clearly hope this will not be the case.

There will, of course, be a meeting for all parents and students concerned shortly before the trip departs next year. In the meantime, if you have any immediate questions regarding the trip, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours faithfully

Mr P Low
Trip Leader
Area Leader: History

*As in previous years, we intend to apply for a 'group passport' for all students who are British nationals. This replaces the need for each child to hold their own individual passport. We have been assured by the Passport Office that the group passport system will continue to operate after the UK leaves the European Union. We will, however, inform you immediately if the situation regarding passports subsequently changes.