March 2022

Dear Year 10 Pupil and Parents

**Year 11 Ardeche/Mediterranean Adventure Holiday - July 2023**

We are delighted to be able to re-introduce our annual PGL Ardeche/Mediterranean adventure holiday in July 2023 when your child is in Year 11.  This trip has been running successfully for over 30 years and is undoubtedly a most memorable experience for all those who participate, falling as it does after the completion of the GCSE Examinations.

As in previous years, the trips will depart on separate weeks, with coaches A, B and C leaving the week before coaches D and E. Students will be able to choose the week they prefer to travel.

* **Coaches A, B, and C depart on** **Thursday 6 July and return on Friday 14 July 2023**
* **Coaches D and E** **depart on** **Thursday 13 July to return on Friday 21 July 22023**

The groups travel by coach from school to the South of France and arrive at their location early in the morning in time to start a 3-day canoe descent of the beautiful Ardeche Gorge.  This is a superb centre, set in spacious wooded grounds, 2km from the small village of Vagnas and 7km from Vallon Pont d’Arc.

On Day 5 of the trip, the groups transfer to Club Mimosa, situated just outside the holiday resort of Valras Plage.  This site has a beach front location with direct access to a long, open and uncrowded section of the Languedoc coast.  Here we will spend three and a half days involved in water sports such as sailing and windsurfing.

A suggested itinerary is as follows:

**Day**

1. Depart Harrogate (am) to board (pm) Dover-Calais Ferry.  Travel overnight to the Ardeche
2. Arrive (am) in the Ardeche.  Breakfast. Initiation in canoeing (am).  Begin descent of the gorge (pm)
3. Canoeing in the Ardeche
4. Finish river descent
5. Depart for the Mediterranean after breakfast.  Arrive at the Mediterranean at lunchtime.  Introduction to the site, beach and activities (pm)
6. Introduction to the activities (am). Water sports (pm)
7. Water sports
8. Water sports.  Depart after evening meal
9. Arrive in Calais early morning.  Arrive at St Aidan's late afternoon.

In addition to the activities outlined, there may also be visits to local towns, long boat excursions and evening activities organised by PGL staff.  Please note that this trip is reversed for some coaches and they will start at Club Mimosa for the water sport activities and then transfer to the Ardeche for the canoeing.

**No previous experience** of any of these activities is necessary although you must of course be prepared to be fully involved.  Qualified PGL Instructors provide the instruction necessary to ensure safe and enjoyable involvement in all of the activities.  PGL’s safety record is highly impressive and we as a school are confident in their ability to safeguard all who go on the trip and to deal with any problems that may arise.  PGL provide specialist safety equipment such as helmets and buoyancy aids.  **Please note that all participants must be able to swim at least 50 metres.**

The Governing Body at St Aidan’s are happy to support this holiday and will be releasing a considerable number of staff to accompany those who participate.  St Aidan's staff will be with pupils at all times during activities.  If we visit any of the local towns, pupils will be allowed to explore in small groups although they will know where to contact staff in the event of a problem arising. They will also be given detailed instructions as to the extent of their exploration.  During activity sessions, the responsibility for pupils’ safety does lie with qualified PGL Instructors.

**Passports**

Students will travel on their own passports. Passports must currently meet **two requirements for entry to France**. They must be:

* less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the ‘date of issue’)
* valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the ‘expiry date’)

If your child holds a passport other than one issued by the UK Passport Agency, please note it is **your responsibility** to check and apply if they require a visa to travel to France.

**Cost**

We anticipate the cost of the trip to be between £940.00 and £990.00 which includes all travel, full-board accommodation and activities and the payment schedule is as follows:

* 1st Payment £90.00 by Friday 25 March 2022
* 2nd Payment £200.00 by Friday 8 July 2022
* 3rd Payment £225.00 by Friday 30 September 2022
* 4th Payment £235.00 by Friday 25 November 2022
* 5th Payment £240.00 (approx) by Friday 3 March 2023

The final price will be confirmed in **February 2023**. Reminder emails will be sent to parents before each payment is due.

I appreciate that I am asking for payments a long time before this trip is due to take place, but I am trying to meet a PGL deadline that will allow us to qualify for a prompt payment discount, which is of course passed onto you in the price we charge.

**ParentPay**

To give your time to discuss this trip with your son/daughter, ParentPay will open on **Monday 14 March 2022 at 18:00**.  There are 220 places available and these will be allocated via ParentPay on a **first-come, first-served basis** by receipt of online payment.

If your son or daughter is interested in a place, we would ask that you pay the first deposit payment of **£90.00** via ParentPayby Friday 25 March 2022. If you do not have a ParentPay login, please contact Mrs Holey in the Finance Office on h.holey@staidans.co.uk.

**Important Financial Information**

Once the places have been filled, you will not be able to sign up for the trip or pay the deposit, even if it is before the deadline of Friday 25 March 2022.  Please then email Mrs McDonald, the Trips Administrator, (t.mcdonald@staidans.co.uk) and she will create a waiting list based on the date and time of your email.

All payments made by parents are non-refundable,as we must make regular payments to PGL.  Whilst we offer a payment schedule for the trip, please note that after Friday 25 March 2022 you will be required to **pay the full price of the trip if your child withdraws**, unless together we can find a replacement student.  This is due to the cancellation charges imposed on us by PGL.

We therefore ask you to take the time to discuss the trip in detail with your son or daughter prior to paying the deposit to ensure that they are fully committed to the trip.

Consent for the trip is required on ParentPay.  Please note that by ticking the box online, you are agreeing to the following:

* You are happy for your child to take part in the trip
* You agree to the cost of the trip and understand that all payments are non-refundable
* You confirm that the medical information we hold at school is correct and up to date
* You confirm that your child can swim at least 50 metres.

If the trip is cancelled however due to Covid-19, full refunds will be given (please see Covid-19 section below).

**Behaviour**

School trips including residential visits form an important part of the curriculum offered at St Aidan's. When accompanying pupils on a school trip, staff are acting ***in loco parentis*** just as they do in school.  However, trips away from the normal school environment involve considering different routines and environments, which demand that pupils can show an increased level of responsibility and maturity.  To participate in any trip, the school staff must be confident that a pupil will be able to cope with the challenges that the trip presents.

After the deadline date, the Trip Leader, Head of Year and Senior Staff will look at the behaviour, attendance and wellbeing of all pupils who have registered on the trip to decide whether they are able to cope with these demands.  If we decide the trip is not suitable for your son or daughter, we will inform you in writing and we will return deposits in this case**.**  Once a pupil has been accepted onto a trip if, in the time between gaining a place on the trip and the departure, there are concerns again about the pupil's participation on the trip, **the Head of St Aidan’s reserves the right to withdraw the pupil's place and any payments made may not be refunded.**

**COVID-19**

As you will be aware, St Aidan’s takes the current Covid-19 pandemic very seriously and the safety and well-being of all our students and staff is always paramount.  After many discussions with PGL, we are confident that they will continue to monitor Government guidance with regard to Covid-19.   Centres and the teaching at PGL have been adapted to carry out their work in a safe and appropriate way and you can read further information [here](https://www.pgl.co.uk/Files/DocumentManagerDocuments/Web/Policies/PGL-COVID-Secure-Charter.pdf).

**Insurance and Covid-19 cancellation**

All students are covered by our school insurance policy.  Over the last year, all tour operators have introduced new clauses to their booking conditions and you can be reassured that you will receive a full refund if we have to cancel the trip as a direct result of a further national lockdown or Government advice against residential stays.

In addition to our school insurance policy, students will also need a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) which has replaced the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). However, if your child still holds a valid EHIC card, this will remain valid until the expiry date on the card. If their current card expires prior to the trip, you will need to apply for a new card [here](https://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/cra/start?sessionExpired=true).

If you have any queries about the trip, or if meeting the initial deadline for payment presents a problem, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Mrs McDonald.

Kind regards

 

 Mr D Holdsworth

Assistant Head & Coordinator of Outdoor Education

**CONSENT FORM**

**Year 11 Ardeche/Mediterranean Adventure Holiday 2023**

* I consent to my son/daughter taking part in the PGL Adventure Holiday 2023 to the Ardeche/Mediterranean as outlined in the letter dated March 2000

* I can confirm that he/she can swim at least 50 metres

* I have paid £90.00 deposit on ParentPay and understand that this and all further payments are non-refundable unless a replacement student can be found

Name of Pupil ……………………………………………………………………………………  Form ……………………………………

Signed (Parent/Guardian) …………………………………………………………………  Date …………………………………….

**Please return by Friday 25 March 2022 and hand into Main Reception at St Aidan’s High School.**