



27 September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

I wanted to write to you in relation to the Year 6 residential and explain the rationale behind the decision we have taken not to have one. This is not a decision we have taken lightly or without consulting our Chair of Governors and governing body as we understand the valuable experience children get from attending a residential.

The cost for each child attending a residential for 3 days, 2 nights last year was £170 – when we sent the information to parents/carers requesting a deposit, more than half of the year group said it was not something they would be able to afford and therefore their child would not attend. The decision was taken to cancel the residential and have a 5 day activity week for all Year 6 children instead. It is our philosophy that events and visits only take place if it is made available to all children and we have to consider this when negotiating the cost as families all have different circumstances that we have to take into account. This week comprised of a range of activities that all children took part in and cost parents/carers £55. Activities included a visit to the cinema, bowling, Whickham Thorns, a meal in a restaurant amongst other things. All children took part and the majority of parents and carers were able to afford the £55. For those that needed financial support, school was able to subsidise the cost and support families on an individual basis. This is not something school could have afforded for all children who were not attending the residential.

This year, the cost of running a residential was closer to £200, having increased again due to the constantly rising fuel prices etc. so a decision was made not to go ahead. Many parents/carers would find it difficult to pay almost £200, school is not in a financial position to subsidise all those who cannot afford the cost and with the cost of living rising all of the time, it was deemed inappropriate for school to request such a large amount of money from our families. Although the activity week may also increase in price, it would still remain at a reasonable cost for both parents/carers and school to subsidise. Running a residential also has an impact on school in terms of staffing – our staffing levels are not as high as they were 4 years ago due to having to reduce numbers because of a decline in our overall budget hence the need for mixed age classes in four year groups. To staff a residential in line with our own risk assessment for approximately 50 children, we would require a minimum of 7 members of staff – we currently do not have 7 members of staff who could be released for the duration of a residential.

Taking everything into account, the decision has been made not to have a residential and to go ahead with the activity week. Feedback from our children last year was extremely positive and they enjoyed the opportunity to do the activities with their friends after their SATs. Children will be given the opportunity nearer the time to discuss with Mr Beattie and year 6 staff, what type of activities they would

like the week to include. I appreciate that not everyone will agree with the decision we have made but hope you can understand the reasons why.

Yours faithfully

Johanna James

Johanna James
Headteacher