



# NINE ACRES COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Team Work Respect Aspiration Perseverance Caring Creativity Citizenship Courage Independence

***'Striving for Excellence'***

1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

Dear Families,

At this time in the year we would usually be sending you a letter regarding a payment schedule for the Wales Trip for Year 6.

I am writing to you now as we are currently reviewing this offer and conducting further research into some possible alternatives.

There are several reason for this which I will outline below:

## Reasons for the trip:

Previously this school did not offer the varied off-Island trips that the children have the opportunity for now. The current Y5 children have been offered to stay overnight at the museum (Y3), visit Harry Potter Studios (Y4), been skiing (Y5), trip to London including a West End Show and of course the Isle Dance performance. Historically, the initial reason for the Y6 Wales trip held in September was for the children to get to know each other and build relationships with the staff, and because children hadn't stayed away from home before.

Our transition arrangements year on year are now much more focused on individual children's social wellbeing and academic progress. The staffing team meet to discuss the children one by one and this includes the support staff team to. There are planned opportunities in the Summer Term for their new teacher to be with them on several occasions. We no longer have class mix ups and so relationships and friendships between children have been built over time. We have noticed over the past few years that the children are much more settled in to their new year group than before.

## Acorn Adventure, Brecon Beacons:

Feedback from staff who have been to the centre in Wales share that it is now very run down and staff felt that the cost of the trip did not match the facilities available. Yes, the children had a nice time but they could do that anywhere! They shared that over the last two years there has been a lack of care and cleanliness to the centre which caused them frustrations. They shared that plans made previously with the centre were routinely changed last minute to the detriment of our children because of staffing issues.

## The numbers of pupils attending:

Over several years, although this has been the Year 6 trip, a significant proportion of our pupils do not go. This is for several reasons and mostly personal to them. As you know we always encourage and support but for some children this is not a trip they wish to choose. Therefore in most years, we are leaving behind at least a quarter of the cohort who do not join in on this experience and require a full time teacher to remain behind that week so learning time is not lost for them.



### Travel:

Although leaving the Island is a big adventure to some of our children, the experiences that our children now get at Nine Acres are increasingly rich and varied. This is not the first time children will stay away from home with the opportunities we provide throughout their years here. To get to the centre in Wales the children spend a day travelling on the coach and a day travelling back. The staff feel that this is time not well spent and adds to the cost of the trip unnecessarily.

### Cost:

The cost of the trip, along with many other things, continues to rise. As a school we continue to heavily subsidise trips to ensure they are affordable for parents. We cannot continue to do this under the national financial climate. You will be aware from the media that schools are having to make serious financial decisions. You may not be aware that the school subsidises the Wales trip by over £2,500. This includes travel but does not include staff costs. Often the staff take part in this trip as part of their own good will giving up their free time which is unpaid.

If we were to pass the total costs onto the parents then each family would need to pay nearly £400 per child rather than the usual £240.

Having outlined the reasons above and having lengthy discussions with the staff this is a significant amount of money that would not bring the benefits we want for the children.

Please be reassured that we are looking at an alternative trip that will be more for an end of year celebration and take place in the Summer Term. If you have any suggestions, ideas or know of somewhere great for this we would love to hear them!

As always these decisions are never easy and neither is change to what may seem to some as a tradition at Nine Acres. However, I do urge you to consider the wonderful opportunities your child has had so far.

We always put the children at the heart of any decision and we will let you know once we have found an alternative opportunity for them.

Kind Regards



Mrs Dyer

